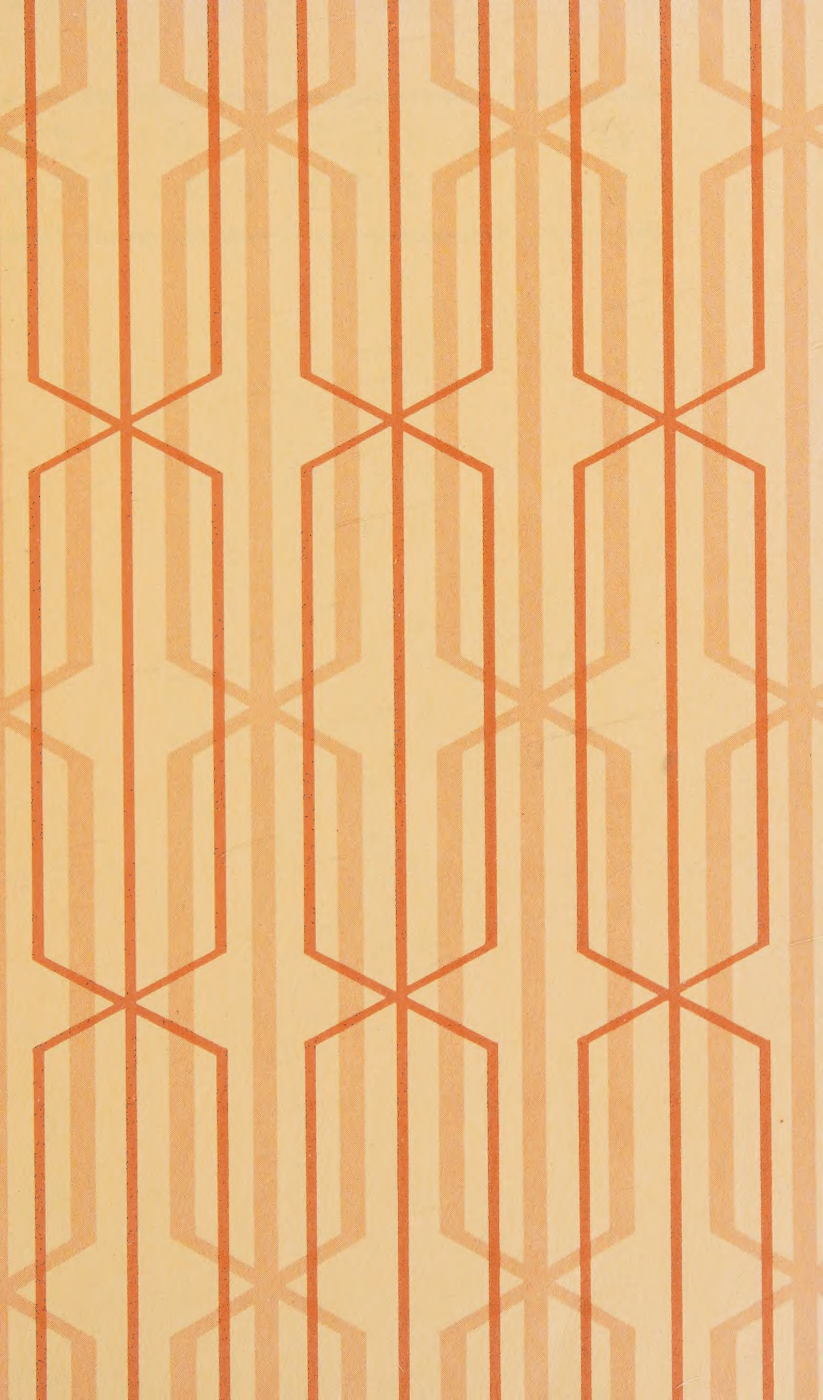



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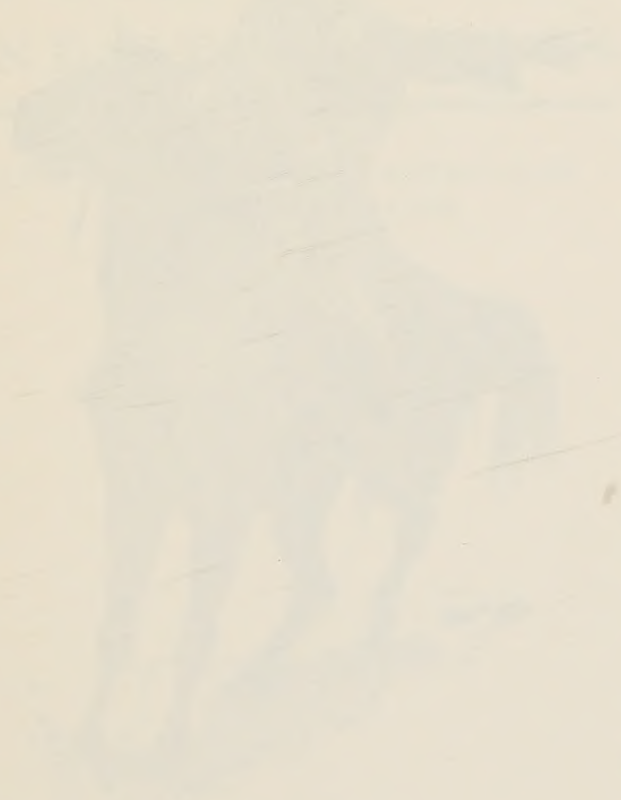
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MY HOST THE ENEMY
AND OTHER TALES





"The Indian stretched his lean arm and shouted, 'Go!'"

MY HOST THE ENEMY AND OTHER TALES

SKETCHES OF LIFE AND ADVENTURE
ON THE BORDER LINE
OF THE WEST

BY
FRANKLIN WELLES CALKINS

Short Story Index Reprint Series



BOOKS FOR LIBRARIES PRESS
FREEPORT, NEW YORK

First Published 1901
Reprinted 1969

STANDARD BOOK NUMBER:
8369-3017-7

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER:
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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

The incidents of actual adventure upon our remote frontiers have often been of a startling nature, surpassing even the inventions of the fiction writer. Out of the experience of a boyhood spent in the upper Missouri country, and ten years of after life as plainsman and mountaineer, this little volume of stories is written. In it the writer has attempted to preserve the true spirit of adventure and the real atmosphere of our later American frontier. Many of the incidents related were of actual occurrence, and in two or three instances I am indebted to western newspapers for the materials of the story. In one of these narratives, marked in the index, there is an adaptation of a pioneer's story so simply and earnestly told that it carried in its atmosphere the best evidence of truth.

F. W. C.

WYOMING, WIS.

A PAIR OF CHAPPAREJOS

A P A I R O F C H A P P A R E J O S

I

At nineteen years of age, Frank Coffee was chief commissary clerk and paymaster for the firm of Adams & Caswell, railway contractors. In its rock-work upon the "Frisco" in I. T., the firm employed nearly five hundred hands.

A lad of Frank's age could scarce have attained to a position of such responsibility east of the Alleghanies. In the Far West, however, many things were possible to the young man of pluck and capacity. Frank's youth was not a matter of comment or consideration at the camps of the contractors. He was an efficient manager of his department, and was popular with the mixed and often anomalous gangs of laborers. He had a pleasant, often humorous word, not only for the foreman, but for Jack, Mike, Ole, Francisco, "Hobo Number Ten," for men of numeral designation and unpronounceable names, when each or any of them came to the commissary tent to make inquiry.

The firm's nearest supply depot and banking point was Paris, eighty miles to southward. A wilderness inhabited by solitary communities of Choctaws or negroes, with here and there the ranch of a white man, lay between.

Twice each month, for the most of the way over a rough, new freight road, Frank Coffee was compelled

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to make a trip to Paris and return. These journeys were made on horseback, and when he went for money, he had as body-guard four trusty men armed with shot-guns and rifles.

Silver for making change was brought in in small amounts by the freight wagons. But the ten or twelve thousand dollars in bills, required for each month's pay-roll, had need to be amply guarded. Twice in five months Frank and his close riding squad met cavalcades of horsemen of superior numbers and suspicious appearance. He and his men were on the alert, however, and nothing came of these encounters.

Spring came and the men who "carried their beds" began taking their time-checks and leaving the camps to move northward. No men came to fill their places; time was crowding the contractors, and there was uneasiness in their quarters.

Some two weeks before regular pay-day, the senior member of the firm visited Frank at his private tent. It was late in the evening, and the young man was alone, hard at work upon his books.

"Frank," said Adams, "the freight wagons must pull out to-morrow. Do you think you could undertake—" he hesitated.

"To bring the pay-roll, yes," said Frank, "if you're ready to assume the risk. I've thought about the matter. I don't see how we can possibly spare an extra man for that duty. I have a plan and think I can manage it safely. I will go bare-handed—without arms—and carry the stuff in a way no one could suspect."

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“Good,” replied his employer, “our regular routine is so well established now that I scarcely believe there can be risk.”

Two days later Frank reached Paris without incident of note. He made purchases of powder and provision, and provided for loading his freight wagons. In the meantime he carried a pair of chapparejos, which he had worn, to a harness-maker—recommended at his bank—and set the man at work sewing calf-skin pockets in the leggings. When twelve pockets were completed, three upon either inner half of each legging, the packages of pay-roll money were smuggled into the workman’s back room and sewed firmly into the compartments.

When the insides of the leggings had been pressed, rolled, and worked with lamp-black and grease, the chaps had every appearance of having been padded for the comfort of the wearer. Outside the stitchings, which had been given an ornamental turn, were made to show wear and use.

Some three hours after leaving Paris, and about sunset, Frank halted at a log tavern in a village at the Red River crossing. Here he had been in the habit of “putting up” of a night. The tavern was a primitive hostelry, kept by an ancient, affable Texan.

The traveler had determined, for safety’s sake, to talk and act exactly as he would upon an ordinary occasion—to shut the consciousness of carrying a large sum of money out of mind. Therefore, upon entering the dingy compartment, which served as office and baggage-room, he hung his yellow slicker and his

chapparejos, as usual, upon one of a row of wooden pegs reserved for guests.

Supper had been eaten, but the newcomer was invited to take a "snack" in the kitchen, and did so. When he had finished eating and returned to the cheerless bar-room, there was no one to talk to, except the usual crowd of village loafers. These and the flickering lamp with smoke-begrimed chimney, the backless chairs and tobacco-laden atmosphere lacked wholly of attraction. He took down his slicker and chapparejos and climbed a pair of stairs to the bunk-room. The inn had but one large sleeping apartment with a dozen or so of beds arranged along the walls. No lights or et ceteras were furnished. Frank chose a bed, flung his leggings and extra clothing upon the back side, and was soon fast asleep.

He arose at daylight in the morning, and it was not until he had descended to the room below, and had started to tie on his chapparejos, that he made the frightful discovery they were not his own.

The leggings he held in hand were of the same pattern, with strings adjusted in exactly the same way, and they were of the same color as his but of newer and heavier leather.

He sprang to his feet at this astounding discovery and ran his eye along the rows of pegs. There were several coats hanging and one saddle, but no leather leggings. He made a hasty search of the room, then ran to the bunk-room and looked over and under each bed, overhauling the discarded gear of the sleepers.

A PAIR OF CHAPPAREJOS

But no other chapparejos than those he had in hand were to be found. His brain whirled in a maze, and in the sudden fury of despair which seized upon him, he would have welcomed any calamity to his person—even death—could he have been certain of the recovery thereby of his employers' money.

He gathered his wits with an effort. There was no one up yet, except in the cook-room where there was an early rattle of dishes. He ran to the kitchen door and called to the cook to wake the landlord and send him around at once.

After some minutes the man appeared, half dressed and rubbing at his eyes.

"Off a'ready, air yo'?" he inquired. "Might a lef' yo're bill, misteh, til yo' done come agin," he added, in mild reproof.

"Not that," said Frank, controlling his voice with choking effort, "some fellow's gone off with my chaps, and I want 'em."

"W'y, dea' me, dea' me! W'y, dawg gawn hit all, aint these yo'rn?" asked the old man, taking up the pair Frank had thrown across a chair.

"No, sir, they're not," said Frank, more calmly. "Somebody's certainly taken mine, and they were a valuable pair."

"Wall, seh," said the old man, examining the leathers, "hit 'twas sho'ly Ike Smith, from Doc Wheeler's ranch, done tuck yo' chaps. He done come in las' night, Ike did, w'ile yo' was eatin' yo' snack. Yes, seh, an' he done hung hisns slicker an' chaps up an' went out en got half shot with apple-

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jack es usyul—en he rid off with yo' leathuhs sho' nough."

"Never mind, old gentleman," said Frank, his normal pulse fast returning, "put me up a snack, please, and I'll be off up the line. I can ride by Wheeler's ranch and trade chaps on the way," and he was off to saddle his horse.

Although he was far from resting easy in mind, something like a ton's weight seemed to have lifted from his appalled brain. He knew the location of Wheeler's ranch by hear-say. It lay some twenty miles up the line and five or six miles to west of the freight road.

He was soon across Red River and clattering through the woods to northward. It was well toward noon, however, and after hard riding, in which he had twice lost his way and got tardy and finally intelligible information at solitary Choctaw cabins, that he reined in a sweating horse in front of Wheeler's ranch house. An Indian woman came to a door at his call, and showed two rows of white teeth in a not unpleasant smile.

Was Doctor Wheeler at home? The woman answered in good English that her husband had gone to Tushkahoma.

And Ike Smith?

She pointed across an open, newly wired enclosure, and Frank saw a distant figure at work constructing fence. He rode at a gallop around the field and approached the man who was lazily driving posts. The fellow dropped his maul as Frank halted and stared with changing countenance.

A P A I R O F C H A P P A R E J O S

"Well?" queried the horseman, breathlessly, "well, I suppose my chaps are down at the house. I've brought yours, you see?"

The man's color came and went, and he grinned in a foolish manner.

"W'y, d—dawg gawn hit n—n—no," he stuttered, "Y—yeh see stranguh, I w—wus a leetle on--onsawdered las' night. I r—raik—raikon I done tuck yo're chaps shore 'nough, b—b—but yo' haint got no kick comin'. Y—y—yuh done got the bes' o—of the swap. I—I couldn't weah yo' d—dawg gawn leathuhs t—tall. They m—made mah laigs hot en I done s—s—swapped 'em to a nigguh h—half-breed, foh a musket. I—I shore 'nough l—lowed yo'd nevvuh tuhn up this away!"

With a sensation of fainting Frank leaned upon his saddle pommel. In a kind of grim despair he struggled against dizziness until he could again think clearly. He could not even chide this man for he knew too well that he himself, in his determined careless assurance, had made the exchange of chapparejos.

"Where does this half-breed, this man you traded with, live?" he asked at length, and with a brave assumption of indifference.

"H—he lives en Lawgtown—n—nigguh-Injun t—town b—b—beout eight mile straight east o—on Caney's Fawk," answered the man, evidently much relieved that he had escaped a show of displeasure. "B—but," he added, "b—beg—begging' yo' pahding, stranguh, yo d—don't wanter go f—foolin' raound Lawgtown. Y—yo' done got a mighty

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faiah t—trade. W'y, seh, them chaps yo w—
weahin—”

“What’s the man’s name?” Frank asked.

“Wa—wal, seh, he’s done called Jim D—Daylight. B—bu—but, I raikon ’twould mean the same thing ’f h—he wus called J—Jim three o’clock en the mawnin’,” he added, significantly.

Frank wheeled his horse to go. “S—say, misteh,” the man called after him, “I—I wouldn’t go f—foolin’ raoun’ Lawgtown.”

But the distracted young man had but one thought in mind, and that was to find Jim Daylight in the briefest possible space of time. He could not trust the secret of the hidden money to Ike Smith or to any other stranger.

In spite of the despair at his heart, a certain grim humor in the situation forced itself upon him. He laughed recklessly, irresponsibly, as he spurred his tired horse forward. To realize that ten thousand dollars were actually knocking about the country, trading like a broken jack-knife.

Doubtless Jim Daylight would be “on the swap” again and before night half the mongrel traders at Logtown might be made unwittingly rich. If the chaparejos and their treasure were only of remote interest to himself he conceded that their ultimate disposal would offer enticing matter of speculation.

As it was, he could only follow them into what danger he might.

He rode back partly over the route he had followed from the railroad right-of-way. At a contractor’s

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camp he again inquired for Caney's Fork and Logtown. At first he met with ill-success, but at length, in riding along the line, came upon a grade foreman, a Kansan, who was well acquainted with the lay of country thereabouts. This man gave minute directions, stopping work to trace upon his dump the winding of Caney's Fork and the exact location of Logtown, and describing Jim Daylight's cabin beyond the possibility of mistaking.

"Dunno, though, what any white man, in his senses, wants to go projecting around there for," he added, in almost the words of Ike Smith.

Frank Coffee did not stop to tell his errand, but thanked the man, and rode on. The dull despair and misery at his heart had passed and he again was able to think clearly and calmly. He believed now that he should find the chapparejos at Logtown and he trusted to the silver in his pockets to arrange matters finally. With a map of Logtown in his head, his plan of action assumed definite shape, and presently he discovered that he was hungry. He had not tasted a mouthful since the ill-fated supper at Red River.

He halted at a small branch presently, turned his horse loose, and ate a part of his snack.

After a needed rest he rode along the branch—by direction—until he reached the shut-in valley of Caney's Fork. He soon came upon the Logtown trail, a cart-wheel road, rutting a red-clay soil and twisting among trees, huge sycamores and white oaks, paw paw, pecan, and hackberry and amid a tangled undergrowth of briar and ivy.

Six times this rough trail forded the shallow creek, each time plunging the horseman, like a diver, into a deep, ditch-like channel cut into strata of friable clay. The twisting road, the gloomy woods, the bush-grown, stealthy ditch, were suggestive enough of a proper environment for rogues.

After the sixth ford he came suddenly into an opening adjoining a small truck-patch of the first domicile in Logtown. Some general attempt at a clearing had been made. Within its area, amid an acreage of dry stumps, stubs, and skeletons of girdled trees, the bark roofs and rough stone chimneys of several cabins could be seen. There were also pony and cow corrals built of rails laid close and high like Arkansas turkey pens.

The dense enclosure of green woods, the scattered patches of young corn, "yams," and vines served only to accentuate the desolation of a "dead timber" clearing. The gray, mud-plastered cabins of monotonous, hen-coop pattern offered little to enliven interest as he passed them one by one. Here and there one or more black faces peered, with curious, rolling eyes, from an open doorway, or half-naked pickaninnies scuttled around corners and peeped between projecting ends of logs.

Mongrel curs of many sizes and colors, yapped in varying degrees of ferocity.

The seventh cabin, standing—like the fifth—upon a slight elevation upon the creek bank, was Jim Daylight's. In front of this domicile the horseman dismounted, tied his animal to an up-tilted ox-cart and, with perfect assurance, walked in at the cabin's open

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door. A woman, of mixed blood, sat near a corner bed, busy with some kind of rough mending. She arose as he entered with a startled air and a slight exclamation.

"Is Jim Daylight at home?" asked Frank, in the tone of one familiar and quite at ease.

"Na!" exclaimed the woman, huskily, "Na—gone—gone way."

At a glance Frank decided she was more Indian than negro. Her face was deeply flushed with emotion, evidently mixed of fear, anger, and embarrassment. She shrank away toward a further wall and two small, tattered editions of herself crept hastily under the pole-framed bed.

Frank's eyes swept the single living-room, which contained a fireplace, a few cooking utensils upon and under an old table, some three-legged stools, and a backless chair, with provision-boxes and barrels arranged in several corners. Upon one of the barrels lay a small, flat saddle, and under the saddle a pair of chapparejos which he immediately recognized as his own.

With a tremendous effort of self-control he stepped carelessly across to the barrel, lifted the saddle and took up the chapparejos.

"These are mine," he said to the staring woman. A glance assured him that the precious paddings were intact.

"A man traded with me at Red River," he explained, "and these I wear belong to your husband—see?"

"Me do' know, me do' know," muttered the woman, "me do' know notting tall."

Frank coolly sat upon a stool, and while the woman stared speechlessly, exchanged chapparejos. He tossed the ones he had worn upon the barrel.

"Tell Jim it's all right, now," he said to the woman, reassuringly, and out he walked, remounted his horse and took the road.

As he rode away from the cabin two men appeared upon the creek bank near at hand. One of them was swinging a fish-pole and the other held a gun in hand. Both were black and they stared hard at Frank as he passed them. He merely gave them a careless nod and rode on with the air of a man quite able to take care of himself.

He jogged along leisurely determined to pay no attention to any demonstration not absolutely hostile. He passed the line of cabins at a slow trot and was aware of more curious and partly concealed observers.

Once out of the clearing and under cover of the deep woods, he could hardly restrain himself from swinging his hat and venting whoops of delight.

Truly he had had a fearful scare about the money. His plan had been perfect enough, too, but for one error—that of not wearing his chaps to supper and until he went to bed at Red River.

He wondered, laughingly, what the lazy mongrel folk of Logtown would have to say of their abrupt visitor when news of his performance had spread and they came to talk him over. The woman—Daylight's wife—had evidently been more frightened than angry.

A PAIR OF CHAPPAREJOS

If Jim really had been crooked she must, of course, have feared that a marshal or some officer was after him.

He rode his tired horse at an easy trot, concluding to spend the night with a sub-contractor whom he knew some two or three hours' ride up the line.

He had crossed the third or fourth ford and was jogging on, in great content of mind, when he heard a rapid clatter of horses' hoofs in his rear.

In much trepidation he halted and listened. Yes, there were two or more horsemen coming on the road and at a pace that admitted of no construction but that the riders were hotly chased or chasing. The conviction seized upon him that the men he had seen on the creek bank had listened to the woman's story and then had mounted and were after him.

Doubtless one of the men was Jim Daylight. Instantly he plied his spurs and sent his horse at a run over the rough trail. He had not reckoned upon finding characters so desperate at Logtown, but since they were after him he would dodge them in some way.

He determined as a last resort, to jump from his horse and take to the cover of briar and bush. They would be satisfied, probably, if they got his horse and saddle.

At a turn of the road he looked behind to see if any rider was in sight. And then there was a fierce concussion—an electric display of fireworks—and the world was a blank to the falling rider.

II

The prostrate rider awoke, as from a drugged sleep, to find himself lying face downward upon the damp, red clay of the road. There was a racking pain over one temple, and his eyes swam in a mist as he raised his head to look about.

It was some time before he came to himself sufficiently to sit up and take in the situation. He then discovered that he had been knocked out of his saddle by the projecting limb of a hackberry tree. His broad-rimmed hat lay near at hand, apparently where it had fallen. His slicker, torn from its strings in his fall, was spread across the wheel-tracks some yards away.

His chapparejos had been taken, and his silver watch, and his pockets had been rifled of all valuables save a jack-knife and a few pieces of small change.

Whatever had been the intention of his pursuers, the fellows had apparently left him for dead and to be discovered as the victim of an accident by the next who should come along.

He had now abundant evidence of the existence of a community of scamps, such as the Choctaw wildernesses yet occasionally harbor and whose members are not confined to persons of color.

As soon as he could use his legs he went to a ford and bathed his wounded head now throbbing with heat and pain. He had lain unconscious for some time and the sun was nearly set before he was quite himself again.

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In this wit-gathering time he debated much what move he should make next. He could tramp to Adams & Caswell's camp and bring a force of men, but in the meantime what would become of the chap-parejos?

There was the constant danger that their present possessor would discover superfluity in the leather paddings and rip them out without compunction. At this moment he believed the leggings were inside Jim Daylight's cabin. He concluded that the sole chance of their recovery lay in immediate action.

Once this decision had been reached he acted promptly. He took off his shoes, rolled them in his slicker, and slung the bundle at his back. Then he approached Logtown by way of the creek. He found the water shallow, for the most part, but here and there were deep holes which he had to pass around, clinging to vines and branches.

Thus he waded forward, cautiously feeling his way as darkness came on, until a widening strip of stars and the skeletons of dead trees, reaching ghostly arms above his head, warned him of a near approach to the cabins.

It was yet in the edge of evening. Presently he could hear occasional halloos, the yelping of dogs, and the tinkle of pony or cow-bells at the corrals. He took the remainder of a generous snack from his slicker pocket, spread the garment upon wet soil under the edge of a bank, and ate his supper.

He felt very certain that neither man nor dog had noted his approach to the village.

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In the course of half an hour there came to his ears notes of fiddle music, rough and rasping in their lightest cadence, and then above these the muffled shuffle of cowhide shoes and the voice of a "caller-off."

So the rascals danced and their cabins would be emptied! Considerably elated at this prospect he slipped into the water and again waded carefully down stream.

He located the cabin he had visited by several cautious bank-climbings, and finally, in a cluster of bushes, found himself almost under its eaves.

He was sorely disappointed at discovering a light through cracks in its chinkings, and at hearing a woman's voice within scolding in a barbarous tongue. He discovered, however, a low addition to the shack, six or seven feet square, which had escaped his attention in approaching from the road.

Soon a dog, near at hand, began barking fiercely and he slipped hastily down the sloping bank. Half way to the bottom he thrust one foot into a large hole. He nearly fell into a cavity, in fact, and stooping among the bushes to examine found it quite large enough for entrance upon the hands and knees.

He crawled in at the aperture thus discovered, unhesitatingly, and lay upon the damp ground until certain that the dog had not followed him. He then moved along the dank, ill-smelling orifice, certain that he had stumbled upon a way of secret exit from the cabin. The hole turned upward and presently the crown of his hat came lightly in contact with some

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hard surface. This he found, upon examination, to be a dry cowhide thrown over the mouth of the hole.

He lifted the edge of the skin with infinite caution, and as he had confidently expected, the passage was connected with the outer apartment of the cabin. Lights shining through cracks of the inner wall disclosed a room without other openings and empty save for a heap of rubbish.

He pushed the cowhide aside, inch by inch, and finally got noiselessly to his feet and stood erect. Peering through a narrow crack, at the level of his eyes, he could look in upon a part of the living-room. There was no one in, evidently, but the woman and the two small children he had seen.

The woman sat upon the edge of a bunk-bed trying to get her little ones asleep. She busied herself braiding her coarse, freshly greased tresses, alternately crooning and scolding at the youngsters who kicked and tumbled in quite the fashion of civilized babies when there is sufficient reason they should go to sleep.

It was a good half hour before the pickaninnies closed their eyes and the woman, bare-headed, went out, shut the door and turned a key in a padlock.

Frank immediately began investigation. As he had suspected there was a loose log—a bottom log of the main building—about four feet long. He gently rolled it aside, crawled through the aperture, and emerged from under the bunk upon which the young ones were sleeping.

A lantern, burning low, stood upon the back leaf of a table. With the aid of this light he carefully ex-

plored the room. The saddle was in its place upon the barrel, but no chapparejos were to be found. He explored every nook and corner, even running his hand under the mattress upon which the black babies were lying.

His disappointment may be imagined. What should he—what could he do next?

A small, cheap mirror hanging over the fireplace, and the condition of the lantern in his hand, finally decided the matter.

At home he had made up for parts in negro minstrel performances. The wick scrapings at the bottom of the dirty lantern offered material for the skin decoration of a company of players.

In the interest of his search he would go to the dance. He wore no beard, his lips were reasonably full and rounded, and his black hair had been closely cropped at Paris.

Fifteen or twenty minutes of careful manipulation served to transform him, in appearance, to a typical darky of the region.

His muddy pants were turned up half way to the knees, his woolen shirt rolled in at the breast, and his sombrero, with band changed from white to black, was jammed down upon his ears. To complete the "make-up" he cut off the skirt of his canvas-lined slicker and wore the upper part, inside out, as a white jacket.

Thus arrayed, he effaced evidences of his work, replaced the lantern, and crawled out the way he had entered.

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He hid the skirt of his slicker in some bushes, put on his shoes, cut a stout stick to the length of a cane, mounted the bank, and boldly crossed the road. As he strode along amid stumps and across a truck-patch toward a light and the sounds of fiddle and dancing, curs of all sorts came yapping after him. He swung his stick savagely to keep them off.

He passed a number of saddled ponies tied to stumps, and as he approached the noisy quarter, a group of men and women stood outside its open door. Inside the cabin was a maze of whirling, jiggling figures. Sombreros and highly figured calicoes seemed to be the main features of dress.

Upon drawing near, he saw that the shack was a large one, and that all its furniture had been moved outside to make room for a picturesque fandango.

"H'lo, Nig! Wha'd yo' come frum?" a voice shouted, as he came into an angle of light near the door. He stopped in the midst of a circle of curious ones, to give an account of himself. He told his story in a careless, happy-go-lucky fashion, and in the dialect in vogue. He had been working along the railroad, and in coming up the line, had taken a wrong road, had fallen into the creek and—

Here his tale of disaster was interrupted by shouts of hilarious laughter. His introduction had been sufficient.

"Yo' gotter dance de nex' quontilyin wid me, Nig," declared a strapping wench, who leaned against a door-jamb.

"Ve'y happy Ma'y Ann, I assho yuh," Frank

answered, about to enter the room, "but I raikon yo' hatter scuse me maam, yes maam, twel I done git de kink outen mah laigs."

"Huccum yo know mah name, Ma'y Ann?" she demanded.

"Case all de good culled gulls is name Ma'y Ann!" Frank shouted, showing his teeth and rolling his eyes in a way intended to display humor.

"Hoo, hoo, hoo," giggled the girl, and there were guffaws of laughter from the bystanders. The newcomer had already made himself popular.

He stepped inside the door and was greeted with shouts of welcome from a number of dancers. He moved along a near wall, among lookers-on, grinning, rolling his eyes and kowtowing here and there.

He wished to get acquainted all around and to keep a shrewd lookout. Most of the dancers, apparently, were of pure African blood. These were the lively ones. If all were rascals, they were, at least, a jolly lot. There were both good-natured and evil faces among them. Some, however, of Indian feature danced or looked on with the impenetrable taciturnity of their race.

Nearly all the men wore their hats, and here and there one stood or danced, uncomfortably, in the leather leggings of the range. These last seemed to be visitors.

Eight or ten couple were threshing around the floor to the measures of a quadrille, called off by the fiddler who sat upon an upturned cracker-box with his back to a window opening.

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This ducky, a big African of pronounced features, was a boisterous fellow with an exceedingly ugly eye, yet much reckless jollity of demeanor.

"Hi, yo', strangah!" he shouted at Frank, as the quadrille finished with a final clatter of pounding heels, "lak 'nough, mebbby yo' plays de fiddle, yo'sef?"

"I does," Frank answered in a calm, superior voice. As a matter of fact, at his home he had, for a year or two, off and on sawed at an old violin which had belonged to his grandfather. He knew that his playing, yet, was several shades in advance of that he had just heard.

The fiddler jumped from his box with alacrity.

"Come en play a chune," he shouted, in his calling-off voice, "Ah watter shake mah laigs—onct."

Nothing loath Frank stepped forward and took fiddle and bow from the willing ducky.

As he started to mount the big cracker box, however, he noted that the fiddler had used a pair of leather leggings for a cushion. A single glance at its upturned paddings told him the fiddler's cushion was worth ten thousand dollars.

His heart stopped beating for a moment and he bent over, tuning at the fiddle, to hide his emotion. His swollen temple throbbed in the reaction until it seemed his hat-band would burst, and he felt a sense of suffocation.

He recovered his composure with difficulty and amid the shouts: "Git at dat fiddlin'!" "Quotilyin done sot!" he mounted the box and began sawing.

To control his elation, to think of a plan for safely

securing the chapparejos, to play "Haste to the Wedding," and to call-off in the same breath, taxed his powers of self-control to the utmost.

Yet the jubilance of his spirit seemed to pass into the bow-arm and the fiddle, and he played with a vim and rollicking cadence which set the dancers off stamping and jigging until bystanders and outsiders joined with shuffling feet.

Shouts and yells arose from the dancers and clouds of dust from the clattering puncheon floor. The uproar speedily became something tremendous, and the air, inside the quarters, grew stifling with dust and the heat of exertion.

Then, in a sudden horror, the fiddler became aware that beads of sweat had begun rolling down his painted cheeks. In a furor of nervous alarm he flung fiddle and bow at a hanging lantern, caught his seat cushion in both hands, and turned a back somersault out at the window.

A crash of glass was followed by yells of amazement and anger. As he alighted upon his feet unharmed and sped away, dodging among the stumps, there was a precious moment of wildest confusion in the cabin. But quickly the cry of "Teef! teef!" was raised—probably by thieves—and a mob of men poured out in pursuit. Not even the dance could offer excitement to compete with that of a man-chase.

Frank had reached the cart road when a whooping tumult was launched upon his heels. Stars were shining and the crowd, or some of them, saw the runner's figure bobbing among the stumps. Instantly a half

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dozen revolvers were barking and bullets sang spitefully in his ears.

Shooting, yelling, calling dogs the mob came on, making the woods re-echo with the din of a regiment.

The runner kept to the road, going in a direction opposite to that from which he had just entered the village. That way lay the nearest approach to cover of the woods and bush.

Hardly had he reached, unharmed, the shelter of the close timber when he heard a great outcry of curs and the baying of several hounds, apparently just turned loose.

The chill of fear struck deep. A fearful fate seemed certain to overtake the brave runner. He could scarce hope to escape being brought to bay by swift, keen-scented hounds. He would, if not torn by the dogs, be dealt with summarily as a thief—all the more summarily should the value of his capture chance to be discovered.

The yelping dogs came nearer. There was a brief delay while his pursuers halted to put the hounds upon his trail. Then the whole pack of Logtown's curs came on the road at full cry.

In desperation Frank turned off the trail and crashed through the brush in the direction of the creek. He reached the stream in a short run and literally rolled down its steep, high bank, clinging to his chapparejos, scratched and torn by bush and briar, until he splashed at full length in the current.

He snatched off the hat, jammed down upon his ears, and flung it among bushes of the opposite

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bank. Then he lay flat in the shallow water, and clinging to his leggings with one hand, paddled and kicked silently at the bottom, half swimming, half crawling down the stream. A moderately swift current helped him to make considerable progress.

He had turned a bend at some fifty yards or more, as he judged, when the hounds came to a halt behind. He heard them splash across the creek and then scramble among the bush with baffled cries.

Alternating between fear and hope he pushed silently on. If the hounds were not trained to the man-chase there was a possibility of evading their noses and their jaws.

Presently he heard angry human cries:

“Come off, yo’ fools—come off—hyah yah! Dis way, nigguhs; down de crick, sho’!”

Then he heard labored threshings among bush and briar apparently on either bank of the stream. The men would gain upon him, though not rapidly on account of impeding undergrowth, and trouble with the dogs.

Something must be done soon. The swimmer had passed several deep holes, and coming upon another chose the last desperate resort which the situation offered.

He swam under the edge of the bank where there were projecting roots and bushes. He seized upon some sunken roots, and digging the toe of one shoe into the soft mud of the bank, lay upon his back, with only his eyes, mouth, and nose out of the water.

Holding on like a diving muskrat among the snags

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with his precious chapparejos submerged, he waited in a suspense quite terrible enough. If the angry mob of men should conclude to explore the creek channel he could have little hope to escape them.

With ears under water he could hear nothing of the upper world, but soon dark figures appeared tearing around amid the brush of the opposite slope. He saw one slip and fall to the water's edge. Dogs were leaping as high as the heads of the men.

Then the hider sank his face under water, held his breath as long as was prudent, slowly brought his nose to the surface, took in air and sank again. He repeated this performance for some minutes, not daring to raise his face enough to open his eyes. When he finally risked a glance the figures upon the bank had disappeared.

For a long time he lay, in desperate suspense, so still that small fishes came and nibbled at the hand which held his chapparejos. Convinced at last, however, that the chase had left his immediate neighborhood, he raised his head, shook the water from his ears, and listened.

Far off in the woods, and welcome now, he heard the baying of the dogs and the faint halloos of men keeping together in their chase.

The dogs had found a trail of somebody or something, which satisfied their noses; it mattered not what to the rejoicing swimmer, who again took up his line of retreat in floating with the current.

It was five o'clock in the morning when Frank reached a railway camp where his smutty and bedrag-

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gled appearance was matter of hilarious comment among the men at breakfast.

He got the ear of a trusty sub-contractor who put armed men in his spring wagon and drove the tired adventurer up the line.

That evening when he had delivered the money, scarcely dampened from its long submergence, and had told his story in the contractors' quarters, his employers looked at him and then at each other in a way that quickened his pulse-beats.

OUR CELEBRATION
AT TWO-OWE-TEE

OUR CELEBRATION AT TWO-OWE-TEE

Last Fourth of July the weather came on cool and beautiful in our mountains. But there were three people at Black Rock Horse Ranch who were anything but cool. In fact Ferd, Florence and I were as "hot" as we could well become—hot with impatience and disgust.

For more than four weeks we had been preparing for a celebration—a picnic at our cottonwood grove, with all the family and all our neighbors along Black Rock Creek to join in making a great day. Ferd, who had borrowed some volumes of the Congressional Record from a local politician, had written a short address, and Florence had practiced diligently some patriotic songs. Moreover, we had expended eight dollars for fireworks of a magnitude worthy of the largest obtainable crowd.

Our discomfiture may be imagined when I say that father, mother and the younger children had failed in a promised return from their visit at Green River, and that, just two days before the Fourth, report had reached Black Rock Valley of a "monster celebration" which was to be held at Lander, to which every mother's son and daughter in our neighborhood had stampeded.

We were left alone, we three. So far as we knew there was not a soul within twenty-five miles of us. We were, of course, still looking for the return of

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our family from Green River, but, as the morning slipped away and eleven o'clock came with no sign of them, Ferd and I gave ourselves up to sulking. We were lying upon our backs in the shade of some cottonwoods near a horse corral, when Florence, who was still on the lookout, shouted to us.

"They're coming!" she cried, running toward us and clapping her hands joyfully. "I can see the dust of their wagon down the valley. Splendid! splendid! We'll have a celebration all to ourselves!"

As there are eight of us, all together, the prospect was not quite so disheartening.

Ferd and I sprang to our feet and climbed the corral fence to look. What we saw was a trail of flying dust rising above a point about a mile distant. A glance, however, showed our more practiced eyes that the dust-cloud was altogether too great to be kicked up by a span of mules and a spring wagon.

"That's not them," declared Ferd, in disgust. "It's a stampede of horses or cattle." A faint roar of trampling hoofs soon bore to our ears the proof of his assertion. The dust-cloud increased in volume and the mutter of pounding hoofs jarred like a distant rumble of thunder.

Our suspicions were quickly roused. We craned our necks and watched in silence. We had only a minute to wait before a big bunch of horses, going at a swift trot, broke cover of the point. A few seconds later we discovered, on the outskirts of the herd, which doubtless numbered many horses of our own, two pony-riders turning the leaders across the valley.

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We did not have to guess that these men were "rustlers," and that there were more of them in the rear pushing the horses forward. Every movement of herd and men proclaimed the fact. A gang of our mountain freebooters had taken advantage of the stockmen's "stampede" to Lander to make another stampede, which should be vastly to their own advantage.

The men were steering their catch across Black Rock Valley up to the mouth of Two-owe-tee Pass. Once through that difficult gap they would hustle the herd into the fastnesses of Owl Creek Mountains, break it up into small bunches and get away with the horses at their leisure.

Ferd and I did not say this to each other—we did not need to do so. We slipped off the fence presently and looked at each other in a grim kind of way.

"Well," said Ferd, "we've got to head off that herd; stampede or scatter 'em, somehow."

"Sure thing!" I assented.

When Florence understood the case, she set up a frantic wail. "You sha'n't go!" she almost screamed. "Those men will shoot you dead! Anyway, if you do, I'll go along and be shot, too!"

"You will stay at home, Florry," said Ferd, kindly, but in a masterful tone. "We'll take good care of ourselves, never fear."

Thereupon she ran crying to the house. We could not stop to comfort her. While Ferd went for our guns, trappings and a snack to eat, I ran to the creek

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pasture, cut out two of our best riding-ponies and saddled them. When I had finished, Ferd came out, wearing his hunting-jacket and carrying my jacket and our guns.

The big side-pockets of the coats were stuffed to bulging, but my jacket felt light enough, and, when I thrust a hand into one of the pockets and drew out a giant "cracker" of the biggest size, I fairly whooped with delight. There were a half-dozen in each pocket and each one was a foot in length. They would make enough noise to stampede a whole tribe of Indians, let alone four or five hundred half-wild horses.

We were off in a twinkling. We knew of an old buffalo and cattle trail a half-mile distant, leading up to the head of Black Rock and round the slopes of several mountains into the north gap of Two-owe-tee. This trail we took.

"We'll plant ourselves in front of that herd in the gap," said Ferd, "and there we'll have our celebration. I believe we can 'counter-stampede,' run 'em over that crowd, and get away in the dust and racket."

The very probable event of a fight against odds, however, kept us feeling pretty sober. We clattered along the "cut off" at a hard gallop without exchanging many remarks.

We rode on for more than an hour, passing up out of Black Rock and over a mountain-ridge. Then we heard a clatter of hoofs at our heels and turned to face Florence. Her pony was sweating, her face was flushed and beseeching, as she pulled up confronting

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us. As the trail was a plain one, she had had no difficulty in following.

"I can't stay behind!" she announced, breathlessly. "I should die of fright! I don't believe those men will fight when they see a girl along."

So that was her reason for coming! We looked at each other in dismay and some disgust. But she was a girl of sixteen, a capable horsewoman and of a determined spirit. We could not compel her to stay behind.

"Well," said Ferd, "when we get to business you'll have to stay where we put you, or we'll tie you up!"

Then we "hit" the trail again and Florence followed. I looked back to see that she was crying, although she rode bravely, and I was truly sorry for her.

In the course of three hours of hard riding we came out of a sharp cut into the cañon of Two-owe-tee. A brief examination convinced us that we should find no better point at which to make a break in the herd and turn them back upon the rustlers. The gap of Two-owe-tee was here some two hundred yards in width, with inaccessible steeps on either hand.

We rather counted on a fight, and Ferd planned for it like a general. He even consented that Florence should take a part in cannonading the herd, whereat she at once became a calm and superior sort of person. She agreed to keep close in to the mouth of the cut, after we had gotten the herd going, and in a certain length of time to take her flight back over the trail by which we had come.

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Even when we told her we would fight—pointing out from a height the high banks of a dry run where we were to make our stand when we had run the herd over the rustlers,—she approved the plan.

“You can stand them off easily,” she declared. “Their bullets can’t hit you in there, and if they charge, you can stampede them with crackers.”

We rather thought so ourselves. We then ate a bit of dinner and rested, listening meanwhile for the approach of the herd. It was nearly four o’clock when we heard the rumble of their hoofs and sighted the trail of dust up the cañon.

We quickly took our places. Florence stood just outside the mouth of the cut, with several giant crackers and some matches in hand. She was a little pale, but cool and collected and showed no sign of fear.

Ferd and I sat our ponies on either side the creek-bed and waited, I must admit, in a state of considerable excitement. We had no fear for our seats, however, as our ponies were gun-broken to firing from the saddle, and would not shy at cannon-shots even. They were, in fact, accustomed to the crack of dynamite and black powder, used in breaking rock and splitting logs near our house.

The foremost horses of the herd were soon close at hand. Of course, the dust they raised completely hid us from view of the rustlers in their rear.

They were coming at a free trot on each side of the creek channel. We waited until the leaders had halted, snorting, in front of us. Then we lighted our

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crackers and flung them, eight or ten, one after the other. Florence took her part in the cannonade, throwing her crackers as far as she could toward the horses.

For half a minute the cañon roared and reverberated with an astounding racket. This thunder and smoke flung the leading horses back upon their fellows until all were bunched like a flock of scared sheep.

Then we rode at them, each of us flinging a final cracker at their heels and all of us yelling like crazy Bannocks at a frolic. In no time we had them going—just “hitting the wind” in the wildest kind of a “counter-stampede.” We followed, aware at first of the active operations of rustlers in our front. The swerving lines of horses told us plainly enough where they were. The dust and confusion prevented our seeing anything more than half a dozen yards distant.

By great good luck we came together in crossing a curve of the creek-bed. We rode at the tail of the herd until assured that the frightened horses would run as long as they were able—that our stampede could not be countered for an hour or more. We knew, from the time which had elapsed, that the rustlers, not fearing immediate pursuit, had saved wind and speed for a long chase.

And now we turned back, determined to take our stand in the mouth of the cut and guard the pass until the stockmen should begin to come in from Lander. It was only through the gap of Two-owe-tee that the rustlers could hope to run stock off our range.

Dust hung heavily in the gap, and in order to

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dodge the rustlers, if possible, we rode back down the creek channel, which here and there only held pools of water.

But luck turned against us just as we had reached a point nearly opposite the mouth of the cut. While riding across a flat where the ditch was extremely shallow, we sighted four horsemen scouting cautiously, evidently trying to discover the cause of the tremendous racket which had turned the stock. They might easily have thought that miners were at work blasting rock somewhere near—doubtless they had come to some such conclusion.

But they saw us before we could get to cover. They were between us and the mouth of the cut, and they wheeled in an ugly fashion, holding their Winchester at a "ready." We slipped out of our saddles and got behind our ponies.

The fellows were suspicious of a larger force close at hand, or they would doubtless have charged us at once. They looked about rather anxiously, scanning the creek banks above and below.

As the dust had cleared somewhat, we could see their faces quite plainly. They were not more than fifty or sixty yards away. Three of them were dressed as cowboys and looked like ordinary line riders. The fourth, and apparently the leader, wore a blue woolen shirt and a stiff hat. He had a drooping black mustache and long hair.

Presently the four got in line and began moving slowly toward us. They evidently wanted to make sure of us at the first fire.

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"Halt where you are or somebody'll get hurt!" shouted Ferd. The rustlers glanced at each other. Two of them grinned wickedly. They came on without pausing.

Scared as I was, I was far more frightened in behalf of those reckless men than on my own account. If they could have known how quick and certain Ferd was with a rifle, they certainly would have kept their distance. I knew one of them must fall at my brother's first fire, and if they charged in saddle, I did not doubt he would kill them all before they could reach us—he was just as quick as that on the trigger, and could work his lever as a boy flips a marble. His rifle was already leveled, covering the leader.

"Halt, there, I tell you!" he called again, in a tone that would have stopped any but the most desperate of men. The rustlers fingered their Winchester. They were about to begin the fight. Then, suddenly, out of the dust that still banked along the steeps, Florence came galloping directly at them.

The fellows turned their heads quickly at hearing the patter of her pony's hoofs and the leader wheeled his horse sharply about. The latter lowered the rifle he had half-presented when he saw a girl confronting him. It was well enough for him that he did so.

Florence coolly pulled up in front and a little to one side of this astonished rustler.

"Those are my brothers down there," we heard her saying in a clear voice. "I am going to help them drive the horses. I guess my stirrup-strap is breaking

loose." And she stooped over on the side opposite the man, as if to attend to her footing.

Then, before the leader or his men could recover from surprise, Florence straightened up and flung a hissing cracker at his pony's head.

At fifteen feet she ought not to have missed; but the pony dodged at the motion of her arm and the big yellow cracker struck the rider somewhere about his belt and exploded. The man was knocked or thrown out of his saddle, sprawling like a stricken frog. His pony sprang away, reeling from the concussion.

One of the mounted men yelled "Dynamite!" and all three put spurs to their dancing ponies and were out of range and out of sight in no time.

Ferd and I now advanced, with our guns covering the fallen rustler, who had raised himself to a sitting posture and seemed to be groping for his Winchester. He was blind and dizzy as yet from the shock he had received.

Florence had dismounted and secured his gun.

"I'm dreadfully sorry I hurt you, sir," we heard her saying, ruefully. "I only meant to stampede your horses and keep you from shooting at my brothers."

She had, indeed, done execution. The man's shirt-front was blown away, his breast and face were blackened with powder, his mustache and eyebrows were singed off and his eyes were red and bleary and rolled like those of a drunken man.

He was still lightheaded when Ferd and I came

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up. We got him to his feet and walked him round a bit. Florence ran to a pool and brought water in my wool hat. He drank eagerly.

When he had fully recovered his senses we knew that he was not seriously injured. He sat down upon the ground presently and, although the pain of his burns must have been acute, he grinned at us with a sort of grim humor.

"Well," he asked; "goin' to shoot me up?"

I had already caught his horse.

"Get into your saddle and get out of these parts," said Ferd. "Try to make an honest living in future, and no one will hurt you."

The man, with a grimace of humiliation, mounted his animal and rode away. We were glad enough to see the last of him.

We overtook the main herd of stampeded horses near the summit of the pass. That night we slept upon beds of spruce boughs. We reached home about eight o'clock in the morning and found the rest of the family awaiting us. They thought we must have gone to Lander.

When the stockmen came back from Lander they were in a great state of indignation. There had been no celebration and they had ridden a hundred miles and back for nothing. It soon turned out that the rustlers themselves had caused the false report to be circulated.

I must say that Florence is now a person of considerable reputation in these parts.

THE PICKED SEVEN
AT HAT - BAND

THE PICKED SEVEN AT HAT - BAND

This is the story of Jared Fox, "a soloist in heroic drama," as he styles himself, and whose career as a successful impersonator grew out of peculiar circumstances.

It was an off-day at Hat-Band, when I arrived at the ranch, on a hot afternoon in mid-July, and the "Picked Seven," as the company's superintendent had called them, lay in the shade of a big L-shaped log building.

They were lounging upon the sand in the loose undress of the cow-puncher. Several were snoring as I came within ear-shot; others lifted their heads lazily at my greeting, gazing at me with drowsy, nonchalant incuriousness. "How," one of them grunted indifferently in return to my salutation. I dumped my valise and roll of blankets upon the sand and took a seat upon the pack.

"Gentlemen," I said, after I had wiped the sweat from my face, "I'm the new cook; your superintendent, Mr. Aitkins, hired me at Rapid last week."

"So? Mister Aitkin hired yeh, did 'e?"

I recognized the speaker, a middle-aged man with a long, sandy mustache and keen gray eyes. It was Gilsey, the foreman at Hat-Band, as Aitkins had described him.

"Mister Aitkins hired yeh, did 'e?" asked the man, with a drawling accent. "Well, that's sort o' curi's;

'pears like Bob gen'ly asks my consent w'en 'e sends a man out this a-way. Yew can walk right in and git supper, Cookee."

It was not yet four o'clock. I thought I knew the ways of cowmen pretty well, and laughed good-humoredly. The men who were awake looked at me with a kind of solemn savagery, as though I had flouted an oracle.

"Will 'e get up and dance, boss?" asked one of them, laying his hand upon a recently discarded revolver belt. The boss slowly shook his head.

"Hits too tender," he said, in tones of commiseration; "we cain't have hits feet drug around yere full o' lead!"

Again I laughed, with the air of one who is in the joke and quite willing to furnish a moment's amusement, and again my merriment drew a stare of disapproval.

"What is the matter with these fellows?" I thought. "Perhaps it's my store pants, calico shirt, and stiff hat." I wore the hat because I had it and it was difficult to pack in my valise. I reflected that if my clothes were at fault I could soon remedy that defect from the contents of my grip. I determined to get into favor at once, if possible, and so I arose and announced my willingness to get supper if someone would show me the ranch kitchen and where to find the eatables.

"Cook-house 's at the south end," said the foreman, indifferently, "grub's all in sight."

As I walked in the direction indicated I heard

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muttered remarks among the men: "Nuther tenderfoot," "Busted Black-Hiller," and the like. I smiled a little bitterly. "Black Hills or bust" had been painted in big letters upon our wagon cover, when four of us had set out from Iowa toward the mining country. I was "busted" fast enough; but I resented the epithet of "tenderfoot," as what prospector of a year's experience does not?

I found the door of the cook-house open and walked in. The room was large—some twenty feet by twenty-four. Near the middle, on its ground floor, stood a long plank table, supporting an appalling array of dirty tin plates, cups, knives and forks, crusts and bacon rinds.

At the end near the door was a large, grimy cook-stove in the midst of a stack of grimier pots, kettles and frying-pans. Barrels, boxes and piles of canned goods were arrayed along one wall; against the legs of the opposite hung hams and strips of bacon in every conceivable state of hagglement. Over and around all this debris a swarm of fat flies buzzed in plethoric content.

No wonder the cattle company's superintendent had offered eighty dollars per month to a man who would agree to cook here for a full year, for a competent cook could save his wages every month at the prices provisions then sold for!

I began a work of renovation at once. There was a clear, running stream close at hand and plenty of wood in sight. In the course of an hour, by the help of hot water, soap and sand, I had scoured the ket-

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tles, plates and things to a semblance of cleanliness. Then I got supper. A year's experience in cooking for myself had taught me to make baking-powder bread and to cook bacon, beans, coffee, etc., fairly well; and so when I called the men at six o'clock their table was loaded with smoking abundance.

I hoped they would show some signs of appreciation of my art when I called them, but they did not. There they sat—stolid, leather-visaged, feeding with business-like movements and in silence save for the rattle of their knives upon the tin platters. They scarcely spoke during the meal, and when to me, only to give orders in peremptory manner: “Cookee, more coffee,” or “Drive them biscuit down the line, Cookee.”

After supper, as I was washing the pots and plates, I heard hammering in an adjoining room. Presently the foreman and one of his men opened a door and came in, lugging a narrow, box-made, one-legged bunk, which they nailed up in a corner opposite my stove.

“Your bunk, Cookee,” said the foreman when they had finished. “Breakfast at five an’ no racket in the bunk-room—savey?”

But the brand of absolute inferiority was not placed upon me until later. I got breakfast on time in the morning. Again the men ate in silence. As they came in, however, each man had thrown a kind of belt-pouch or canvas sack upon one end of the table.

“Fill them sacks with snack quick’s you git through

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eatin','' said Gilsey, ''an' one for yourself; you go on drive to-day.''

I knew that ranch cooks were expected to help occasionally on the line, and, though I was not an expert horseman, I was rather glad of the prospect of a day out with the men. I would get acquainted with someone, at least. Alas, for my confidence and credulity!

The men saddled their broncos at the corrals and came in a squad about the cook-house door. I went out to them and handed each man his ''snack.'' One of them held the lariat of an extra pony which stood with its head down lazily whisking at the morning flies. I mounted in perfect confidence.

''Got yer seat all right?'' asked the cowboy. I nodded carelessly. He tossed me the end of the lariat. The rope fell across my pony's withers and instantly the creature set in pitching and bucking like a crazy thing. I clung frantically to the saddle-pommel for an instant and then was dumped ignominiously over the brute's head, neck and heels upon the sand.

The cowmen sat on their ponies looking at me in oppressive silence for a moment. Then Gilsey, the foreman, spoke:

''Boys, this is hit,'' he said, solemnly; ''Bob's college gradyeate! Ike,'' turning to the man who held my pony, ''throw the leathers off that cayuse and then hit the road ter Custer an' git a bunch o' calico.'' And the squad put spurs to their horses and galloped away.

M Y H O S T T H E E N E M Y

Hopelessly chagrined, I sat in the cook-house door and spent an exceedingly uncomfortable quarter of an hour. I understood the situation now and drew cold comfort from the knowledge. Aitkins had been over from Rapid City while I was settling my affairs there and had given these men my history, which I had detailed quite frankly to him. Doubtless he had bragged to them of hiring a college man for their cook—he had been tonguey and important in his talk to me.

I passed a dismal forenoon trying to think of some way to readjust myself; to establish a basis of decent respect at Hat-Band. I could think of no plan and finally gave it up, determined to do my work well and to honestly earn the wages paid.

That afternoon I lay in the shade and occupied myself gazing dreamily upon the foothills, finding variety of interest in their mottled skirts of pine and birch, their red rock-ledges and shaded cañons and their gray slopes dotted with horses and cattle.

After a time I bethought me to explore the ranch building. There was little to reward my curiosity. The bunk-room was a commodious but barren place, extending around both angles of the L; an array of a dozen bunks along the walls and a big stone fireplace alone relieved its box-like monotony. The east and last room of the building was a counterpart in size of the cook-house and was used for storage. Saddles, harness, rope, rawhide leather, buffalo pelts, old boots and sombreros hung along the walls or lay piled about in profusion.

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The men did not return until nearly midnight. They came in by ones and twos and rattled noisily about the cook-room while helping themselves to the victuals I had placed upon the table. There was not the slightest reference to myself in their occasional remarks. "Ike" was the last one in.

When I got up in the morning I found a half-bolt of calico and a package of needles and thread upon the table. The fellow had actually ridden to Custer and executed the foreman's order of the morning before.

I laid the goods upon an empty barrel and got breakfast, feeling hot and angry enough. I determined to keep cool, however, and to hold my place at all hazards.

The men ate their meal in the usual fashion. The foreman informed me with grave emphasis, though, that if I intended cooking at that ranch I would have to wear calico. I answered seriously that cooks and waiters in Eastern restaurants always wore uniforms, and he had been very thoughtful to provide material for one. I should make good use of it, as I liked to be in style.

Gilsey shrugged his shoulders and the men grinned.

I had a bachelor's handy-mending outfit in my grip and, after my breakfast dishes were washed, I set to work upon the calico. When the men came to supper at night I wore a sleeveless skirt-apron, belted at the waist, which served very well to keep the grease off my clothes. The cowmen evinced neither surprise nor interest, save that each gave me

a nod of mock politeness. "Evenin', Cookee," said each one as he filed to his place at table.

They now addressed each other very respectfully. "Have some of these bacon, Mister Lowry." "Pass those m'llasses, Mister McCormack," and so on.

There was certainly a combine against me—to keep me in place. A scullion in a Fifth Avenue kitchen might as well have expected an invitation to the parlor as I to meet these men on terms of equality—and I had nothing to play off against them.

As my status seemed hopelessly fixed, I doggedly wore my apron and fashioned others of more convenient patterns. For weeks not a man at Hat-Band spoke to me save to give an order or to curtly answer a question. The dreariness of the life became almost intolerable.

One day a half-dozen Sioux rode over from their reservation across the Cheyenne River and came to the cook-house to ask for bread. I was cooking, and, as the Indians crowded in and around the door, they grinned, grunted and nudged each other: "Ho, ho, squaw cola, squaw cola," they said, evidently much tickled and astonished.

I hurriedly gave each one a biscuit and a slice of bacon and then shut the door in their faces. The humorous contempt of these barbarians angered me and I began to feel that something indeed had gone wrong with me. A sort of ingrained stubbornness, however, held me to my work.

At the end of a couple of months the cattle company's paymaster came around and gave me a month's

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wages. This was some sort of recognition and I plucked up heart a little. Then came Fatty and relief from intolerable loneliness.

He came in the afternoon of an October day—a young fellow, about my age, short and fat to obesity, and riding a pony quite as chunky as himself. He drew rein in front of me as I sat in the cook-house door.

“H’lo, pardner,” he greeted, cheerily, dismounting from his dumpy bronco.

“Pardner!” I rose to him like a hungry trout to a red fly.

“I’m Fatty—jest Fatty,” he announced, grinning into my beaming face. I wrung his hand—he could not have told me more joyful news.

“Used to punch cattle for the company in Nebraska,” he explained, “till I got too fat. B’en runnin’ a dray at Rapid—busted, an’ Bob tol’ me to come over an’ lay down awhile.”

It would have been a sacrilege, in my then state of mind, to have harbored the suspicion that Fatty had been a victim to a prodigious appetite for beer. I made him more than cordially welcome; helped him to picket his pony down the creek, where there was grass, and then cooked him a rousing dinner of beans, bacon, fried bread and tomatoes.

We were soon upon the most intimate terms and swapped personal history in detail. Fatty listened to my experience at Hat-Band without apparent sympathy—he seemed to look upon my treatment by the men as a matter of course.

"These men, yer," he said, "is picked line-riders—a picked seven"—he spoke as if there were occult significance in the number—"an' this ranch is the reserve-line ranch. Injuns on one side, rustlers on t'other—haf to keep both off—haf to keep stock off the reserve, too. Hit takes mighty good men—best ther is, an' they don't cotton to common folks—don't haf to."

How I enjoyed this jerky confidence! I freely forgave him the plain inference of the last quoted remark, too!

Fatty helped me to get supper. When the men returned that evening and came into the cook-house, the foreman and several others, who seemed to know the new-comer, greeted him indifferently.

"H'lo Fatty," they said. Fatty served them to coffee and beans and seemed to feel honored in the privilege.

After supper he fell to work, moved in an empty bunk, and nailed it in a corner opposite to my own. Thus, to my delight, were we domiciled together.

As the days went by we had plenty of leisure in which to amuse ourselves. We fished, shot grouse, pine-hens and cotton-tails, or in disagreeable weather stayed at the cook-house and played checkers or sang songs. I rendered college songs and popular airs pretty well and Fatty was especially good in his "Days of Forty-Nine." He often bewailed the loss of a banjo he had felt obliged to part with.

One day I ventured to turn my strong battery on Fatty. At high school and at a Western college I had been in demand at "literaries" for heroic recitals—

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"Parting of Douglas and Marmion" and that sort of thing. My voice, even at fourteen, was heavy and flexible and well adapted to a florid style of declamation.

I gave for Fatty's benefit a number of pieces in my best manner and was rapturously encored.

At the affecting parts in "Spartacus" my audience shed copious tears, and, in the tragi-heroic, he gripped the bench he sat on with both hands and glared at me with mouth and eyes wide open.

Fatty's genuine emotion and emphatic approval of my performance gave me an inspiration—the bunk-room—a stage—Christmas recitals—perhaps I might interest the picked seven at Hat-Band!

I proposed the scheme to Fatty, tentatively, and he "reckoned it would go with the boys, shore." I knew the cowmen's love for any kind of a show and I determined to give one, with Fatty's help, such as those fellows had perhaps never seen nor heard of.

The next morning I engaged Fatty to fill my place as cook, and rode his pony, or rather a pony he had borrowed of the "company," to Custer. There I wrote to a young lady, whom I knew at Davenport, Iowa, who was a newspaper reporter and versed in stage matters. I sent a draft for seventy dollars, with a request that she fill an enclosed order for me.

Three weeks later Fatty drove the ranch team to Custer and brought back a load of lumber and a stout, iron-bound trunk. When I opened the trunk there was nothing left to desire; my friend had more than filled instructions. Gorgeously figured calico for curtains, various cheaply decorated but showy costumes,

a tinselled coat of mail, helmet, visor and shield of steel-colored pasteboard, a Roman short-sword, forged to order, masks and cheap draperies for dummy lay-figures, harness-rings and wax candles galore—all and more than I had asked for. My friend wrote that she had personally helped to make each costume, for which I had sent the measurements.

At the bottom of the trunk there was a new banjo for Fatty. His eyes shone and filled with emotional tears when I gave it to him; and he soon discovered ability, too, in strumming accompaniments to simple ditties.

When the cowmen came that night Gilsey asked Fatty—apropos of the load of lumber—whether Cookee intended to lay a floor in his cook-house.

“No, sir,” said Fatty, boldly; “Fox is goin’ to give a show, he is, on Christmas night, an’ ’e wants to rig a stage in the bunk-room. Will you all take hit in?”

They were at supper. Gilsey looked his surprise, and the men turned incredulous eyes upon me as I rattled nervously at the stove. The boss recovered himself quickly and remarked, with apparent indifference, that if there was to be a show at Hat-Band he reckoned the boys would take it in.

“You bet!” said the men; and the habit of ignoring me was immediately resumed. In the days which followed, Fatty and I were busy mortals. We worked at our stage in forenoons; in the afternoons we rehearsed in song and banjo music and fashioned dummy gladiators of gunny-sacks stuffed with straw.

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The work in the bunk-room advanced without objection or comment from the foremen or the men.

Five days before Christmas Fatty and I had completed our stage, which we built in the main corner of the bunk-room, facing both wings of the L. It was a convenient platform, raised three feet from the floor, with some sixteen feet of frontage. Above this we rigged a stout curtain rod, strung with harness rings.

Then, on the fifth morning before Christmas, Fatty mysteriously disappeared. I arose to find him gone and his banjo missing from its peg upon the wall. I was astonished, but not convinced, until I had run out to where I had myself picketed his borrowed pony some eighty rods from the ranch building. The animal was gone. . . .

I seemed destined to play the part of Wamba the Witless at Hat-Band, without that celebrated clown's occasional opportunities to make myself felt. I believed evil of Fatty. I could arrive at no other conclusion than that which consigned him to the evils of an overweening appetite for beer. After the excitement of getting ready for a "sure-enough" show had worn off, doubtless the possession of a new banjo and the memory of abundant malt refreshment to be had by strumming in saloons had proven too much for his resolution—if he had any. My disgust knew no bounds.

At breakfast, however, the men evinced neither surprise nor interest in the absence of Fatty. It seemed, in fact, that nothing outside the line of cattle-

punching could stir the imperturbable Picked Seven. In spite of their indifference, their silent disapproval of myself even, I was forced to admire the fellows. They were sober, faithful, hard-riding cowmen. Not a man of them—so much for the judgment of the Belle Fourche Cattle Company—was of the rowdy persuasion. They were mostly men of middle age, or past thirty years, at least; men who thoroughly understood the business of the cattle country and who attended strictly to their duties. Trained riders, Indian fighters, plainsmen of years of experience, from their point of view I was simply a young “tender-foot,” of no quality for their kind of work; one who ought to be at home with his folks “in the states.” I had pretty nearly come around, as I believed, to their way of thinking, too.

I was glad they were too merciful, at least, to make remarks in my hearing in regard to my latest idiosyncrasy in going to the expense of preparing to give them a show and in blindly trusting to Fatty as an accessory.

As the days wore on toward Christmas there came upon me a yearning to go home—a homesickness which I had to fight as one would battle with the coming on of disease. On the day before Christmas, after the men had gone out to “punch” back a lot of cattle which had crossed the Cheyenne, my resolution was sorely tried. To pack my grip, walk to a station and take a stage for the U. P. road was the temptation I had to overcome. I only escaped by seizing a gun and tramping to the foothills after pine-hens.

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The weather was wonderfully mild. Summer had lapped far into the fall months and we were having Indian summer when there should have been a foot of snow. To this mild weather, unquestionably, is due the fact that I am to-day a professional impersonator. When I returned from a successful hunt, feeling much better in mind, there were visitors at the ranch. There was a camp of Sioux some forty rods below the building. I could see the tops of half a dozen tepees above the rise of a bench in the bottom-land and ponies were picketed far out among the sage-brush. There were strange ponies at the horse corral, also, and numbers of strange cowmen and other fellows about the premises. I was considerably astonished at first; then it dawned upon me that there had been trouble about cattle coming down from the foothills and pressing upon the reserve. Doubtless this gathering was a preconcerted one to settle some difficulty of the sort.

As I approached the door of the cook-house a dozen or more of the men lying about upon the sand looked at me curiously.

I said, "How do you do, gentlemen?" and I was surprised enough when several of them answered pleasantly and one of them, a young fellow, evidently from "the states," touched his hat politely.

Without stopping to talk to them I immediately went into the cook-room, deposited my game and gun and began getting supper. From time to time, as I was at work, I noted through the open door more new arrivals at Hat-Band. Men were coming from

all directions, apparently. That something uncommon had happened on the range there certainly could be no doubt. New men kept coming, putting their horses in the corral or picketing them upon the prairie and joining the groups, which quickly increased to a crowd lounging about the different angles of the building.

Evidently these men were waiting for the coming of the Picked Seven—and what was to happen then excited my curiosity not a little.

The foreman had said the men would come in about five o'clock or later. My bread was baked, coffee made and the game ready to fry for supper, when the bunk-room door burst open and I heard a familiar voice shouting:

"Great Scott!" it said. "Fox, w'at's th' matter with yeh? Hain't ye goin' to give a show? Here I comes 'xpecting to find the curtains up and fixin's ready an' finds you a gittin' supper, an' a hundred men an' fifty Injuns waitin' for the bell to ring!"

It was Fatty who pounced in upon me—Fatty, excited, blooming, triumphant! His fluffy cheeks were aglow, but with the hue of health and hard riding; not with the liver-tinted flush of the beer-drinker.

"The show!" I managed to ejaculate, "these men haven't surely come to—" I could get no further. In fact, I had packed away the stuff I had bought, thrusting the useless truck out of sight and out of mind. As the stage we had rigged up could be utilized for extra bunk-room and for seats, with a stow-

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away hole beneath, I had let it stand as perhaps a useful memento of my folly.

“Man, man!” shouted Fatty, in amazement, “couldn’t you guess w’at all the fellows come for? I’ve been drummin’ ’em up fer five days, an’ hain’t I corralled a daisy lot? There’s good money in this crowd, too.”

“Money?” I gasped. “You don’t mean to say you’re going to make all these men pay to come in?”

“They can’t get in without,” declared Fatty, “foreman wouldn’t let ’em, an’ they wouldn’t keer a red for a free show, neither. Ye see, Gilsey talked to me afore I started out, an’ ’lowed ’e didn’t want you givin’ a free show at Hat-Band. I tol’ ’im you was a shore ’nough showman, an’ ’e tol’ me to go out and kin’ of ring in a Christmas evenin’ surprise on yeh. The whites pays a dollar a man to come in an’ the reds four bits, an’ they’ll be mighty tickled they’ve come, too, w’en you get through with ’em.”

I could have hugged Fatty and should have fallen upon his neck and wept if there had been time. As it was I wrung his hand for a moment—not without wet eyes—and then we fell to work like a couple of lumber-jacks.

To put up the curtains properly and to teach Fatty how to manage them, to arrange a dressing-room and bestow my effects in the rear corner of the stage, to prepare brown paper helmets and visors for a half-dozen gunny-sack dummies, to set wax-tapers for footlights and a row of them some three feet apart upon the walls clear around the angles of the room,

was the work of fully two hours. This may seem to have been elaborate preparation for a crowd of cow-boys, miners, wood-cutters and Indians, but I can assure you the effect of the ensemble was not lost on them.

The Picked Seven returned and ate supper about seven o'clock. Fatty and I stepped in while they were eating to snatch a bite and drink a cup of coffee. I noted, with a thrill, an appearance of suppressed interest—even of excitement, perhaps, in the faces of all the men. They talked in subdued tones, but quite freely, of the coming of the crowd, and there were even allusions to the show in their wonder as to whether the bunk-room would hold all the “fellers.”

As I drank my coffee I saw Gilsey regarding me curiously and with a kindly light such as I had never seen before in his eyes. I had, in fact, hard work to keep down my emotion under the steady gaze he bent upon my face. It was as if he had suddenly expressed a boundless faith in myself—in success for me in any proper undertaking. And this complete reversal of opinion from the one he had seemed to hold for so long was almost more than I could bear. Doubtless I had grown morbid under those months of suppression.

I went back to the bunk-room and to my work in a whirl of excitement. In an hour the room was lighted on all sides, and I was ready to begin the entertainment. Fatty announced the fact to the men in the cook-room and the Picked Seven came filing in.

I stood upon the stage, with the curtains thrown

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back, dressed in the costume of James VI. of Scotland, and made my bow to them. Never shall I forget the look upon their faces as the men took in that brilliantly lighted scene. They were like children introduced to fairyland. Their emotions seemed those of subdued wonder and they conversed in low tones as they took their seats upon bunks nearly opposite the stage—all but the foreman.

Gilsey, with Fatty, walked on to the outside door of the bunk-room. There the two talked earnestly for a few minutes. Then Fatty passed through the door, and a minute later I heard, outside, a half-dozen pistol-shots fired in quick succession—a signal doubtless agreed upon without my knowledge. In the meantime the foreman, with a business-like air, quickly arranged a couple of three-legged stools beside the door, took his seat upon one and laid his broad-brimmed hat with crown upturned upon the other. Fatty returned, came to the stage, drew the curtain and stood inside ready to open the show when the crowd should get in.

As I gave final instructions to Fatty, going over the program, orally, for the hundreth time, perhaps, I heard the tramp of men as they came through the door and the clink of their dollars as the foreman tossed them into his hat. Fatty peeped between the curtains, but I resisted the temptation. Finally, there were shuffling sounds and some guttural exclamations, and I knew that the Sioux were coming in. I was astonished and pleased at the remarkable quiet which prevailed. There could be only one way of account-

ing for it—the absence of liquor and the influence of the Picked Seven at Hat-Band. When the last man had gained admission and found standing or sitting room, the silence was almost intense.

I had changed my costume. Fatty rang a tiny bell, which had been provided by my caterer, seized his banjo and drew the curtains. We stepped upon the stage together dressed in Highland plaids.

I have faced many an audience since, but never one which gave me such an instantaneous thrill of inspiration. Directly in front of me, in what might have been called the parquet space, were half a hundred young Sioux, squatted cross-legged upon the floor, togged in all the bravery of their tribes, with grave, upturned faces and glittering black eyes, quietly, yet intensely expectant. Behind these, yet quite near enough, seated upon the bunks, leaning against the walls or squatted Indian fashion, were rows of cowmen, miners and wood-cutters from the Cheyenne range and the foothills. Under the light of rows of wax tapers every white face seemed to have in it the glow of Christmas and of home-memories. The foreman, Gilsey, sat in a cleared space which seemed to have been reserved for him, leaning back against the wall with his arms folded and a flush of emotion—was it pride?—upon his leathern face. Every man in the room had removed his hat. I could have prayed had there been time, but there was not.

Instead, I sang a Scotch home ballad and Fatty strummed an accompaniment. When the song had ended I saw that I was giving my audience—those of

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my own race, at least—what had been expected. After that it was an easy and wholly delightful thing to sing and declaim for them.

There was little demonstration until I gave them Spartacus to the Gladiators. When, shield and sword in hand, I dared Fatty and the Dummies to “meet me on the bloody sands,” there was an outburst of war-whoops among the Sioux and shouts of approval ran around the room. When I wound up with that stirring appeal at the close, my audience was fairly lifted off its feet. The Indians could not understand the words, of course; but they followed the action, and the tones of my voice excited them to a fine frenzy of interest and there were fierce grunts and whoops of approval—“E’e’e’eyegh! Vih! Vi-hi!” Shrill and nerve-compelling war-cries.

I felt that this was not a Christmas effect, but an audience of such a character, so widely gathered, were certainly entitled to a variety of emotions. And it was my audience; there could be no doubt of it. I could make every tone of my voice felt. When I sang, in soft cadence, at the close, “We Shall Meet, but We Shall Miss Him,” I saw more than one rough miner and cowman draw a sleeve across his eyes.

The crowd filed out of the bunk-room as quietly as it had entered, and the foreman came to the stage with a hat half-filled with silver and small bills. He emptied the contents upon the stage front.

“Mr. Fox,” he said, hurriedly, “‘ef here ain’t enough stuff tu pay fer your trouble, lemme know what’s wanted—a hundred and ten, seventy-five, I

make it. An' now I want to ask ye to do yer last cookin' at Hat-Band. We're goin' to have a barbecue to'rds mornin', and hit'll need lots of bread besides the meat for this crowd, and, ef you please, Mr. Fox, make a bar'l of coffee."

He turned upon his heel before I could utter a word of gratitude and walked outside. I gave Fatty ten dollars—all he would take—of the money. Then we rushed to the cook-room and set to work. It was evident that we would need more room for baking than the stove-oven, big as that was, could afford, and Fatty succeeded in finding two Dutch ovens in the storage-room.

Such a baking! For six long hours we did nothing but mix dough and turn out baking-powder biscuits. We made more than a thousand of them. As we worked, we were aware of activity and fun outside. A kind of cowboy Christmas jubilee was in progress. There were bonfires and there were pistol-practice and foot-racing, and, above all, there was a barbecue after the largest and most generous style.

When we finally went out we were assisted by a dozen men in carrying bread and pails of hot coffee. A space of sandy soil between the ranch-buildings and the creek was lighted with a circle of bonfires. In the center of this ring of flame was a huge pile of stones, brought up from the creek channel, and on the stone-heap lay the steaming carcasses of two range beeves, roasted to a turn. The embers of a fire had been raked away from the heap, and two men stood about the hot stones, cutting away smoking strips of

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meat with their knives. The crowd at large was squatted in groups inside the circle of fires, like Indians in council.

Several dry-goods boxes and a barrel were brought out from the storage-room to serve as a receptacle for the bread and coffee. When all the stacks of provisions were in readiness to distribute, the foreman of Hat-Band and his men dismissed other helpers to their places in the crowd.

"Now, gen'l'men," said Gilsey, addressing the circle of expectant faces, "Mr. Fox, the showman, whose goin' to give his show in Rapid an' Deadwood an' a heap of other places, an' who knows wa't's proper tu say for a Christmas morning barbecue, will speak a few words. Hats off, gen'l'men."

What could I say? Never had I been so overcome as I was at that moment! The tears rushed into my eyes; the sea of rough, expectant faces swam in a dizzy maze in the firelight; confused emotions chased one another in my brain. I turned my eyes upward for inspiration. Overhead was a "wonderful, clear night of stars"; in the east a faint glow of coming dawn. My brain cleared, as if by magic, and I lifted up my voice and said:

"My friends, this is the birthday morning of Jesus of Nazareth. Let us remember him. Let us remember father and mother and brother and sister—home! and all the dear ones, living or dead, and let us say the prayer which Jesus taught."

When I had finished that simple morning invocation, speaking with an emotion which I could not con-

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trol, a dozen voices joined in the amen, and a number of men at Hat-Band turned away quickly to hide their faces.

And so, in the dawn of a Christmas morning, we sat down to feast—and, in the appreciation of that rude frontier assemblage, I had found my vocation.

THE OWL CREEK BIGHORN

THE OWL CREEK BIG HORN

One autumn day, not many months ago, Mr. Septimus Conant, an English sportsman, came in at our ranch from his camp in Owl Creek Mountains with an exciting story of a bighorn buck of enormous horns and great size, which he and his Indian guide had hunted unsuccessfully for eleven days. Mr. Conant had secured a photograph at forty yards which quite justified his enthusiasm.

Mr. Conant is one of those most humane and delightful of sportsmen—a camera-hunter. As we at Black Horse Ranch only kill game in season and for our own table use, Mr. Conant's attitude toward our big game makes him always a welcome visitor.

In the case of the great ram, however, which seemed to stand fully four feet in height at the shoulders and to have horns measuring forty inches on the curve and not less than twenty inches in circumference at the base, the attitude of the English hunter changed. He was exceedingly desirous of adding the buck's skin, horns and hoofs to his collection of mounted trophies.

After the one snap shot with his camera, which had caught the ram upon the crest of a "hogback," outlined against a clear sky, neither the hunter nor his guide, although they had hunted the ram for two weeks, had succeeded in getting a fair shot at him. And yet the ram had stuck persistently to his limited

domain, a cluster of high mountain ridges cut with cañons and held within a single loop of the mountain stream.

Mr. Conant, being now obliged to leave for England, offered my brother Ferd and me five hundred dollars for the ram's carcass, packed in snow and delivered whole to a taxidermist in Chicago, whose address he gave us. He drew a map of the mountain ridges, summits, gulches and cañons within the circuit of the ram's feeding-ground. We felt sure that we would be able to earn the five hundred dollars soon after the first snowfall.

For that we had to wait until the eighteenth of December—but then it came right, falling straight down in great feather-flakes to the depth of a foot or more. This kind of snow makes heavy travel for the big game.

We set out at once upon our mountain ponies for Mr. Conant's camp near Owl Creek timber limits. In his stout log shack we soon made ourselves comfortably at home.

The next morning, clad in white duck and wearing Shoshone snow-shoes, we mounted zigzag into the realm of the bighorn ram. The mountains rose in white, indefinable billows, like tumbled piles of white clouds, or melted into each other, hiding shadowless cañons and ravines. Not a landmark which the hunter had penciled was distinctly recognizable.

We had not climbed far before our sense of direction was lost. In this latitude the winter sun is a safe guide at midday only. The white glare of the moun-

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tains, despite our helmet visors, was almost intolerable at times.

Before noon the sun was aflame with uncommon glory and soon our eyes were half-blinded in its glare. At about midday we "jumped" a band of elk, and, as we both missed broadside shots at less than a hundred yards, we determined at once to return to camp and manufacture a better sort of protection for our eyes.

In making a short cut campward we came face to face with an enormous bighorn buck on the very crest of a sharp ridge. He had not been expecting hunters, despite the shots, which he must have heard, for he jumped from the cover of some boulders not more than fifty yards away. There was no mistaking the big ram. He stood for an instant staring in surprise, just as he had stood when Mr. Conant got the snap shot with his camera.

Before we could unshoulder our rifles to shoot, there was a flurry of snow, a glimmer of black heels and the ram plunged in tremendous, plowing leaps down the mountain slope. We fired a dozen futile shots at him, while his every jump reminded us of a snow-plow bucking drifts. Then we gave chase, skating down the steep incline until our shoes took the surface, when, like skee-leapers, and trailing our guns for steerage, we coasted down the steep.

We were too intent upon taking the ram to reckon of danger. There were no trees nor bushes—only occasional boulders and rough spots upon the slope. Light as the snow was, our speed increased until our shoes barely skimmed its surface. The wind whistled

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past our ears and cut our cheeks. On we flew, swooping down, a pair of human hawks, upon the ram.

The big fellow swerved neither to right nor to left, and we were almost upon him, when he gave a great outward leap and dropped out of sight.

Cunning brute! In the same instant we shot down a steep slope, douched through a narrow drift, shot over the rim of a ledge and went whirling through more than a hundred feet of space. What were our thoughts? Indeed, I thought of nothing, but felt a thrilling sense of exhilaration, as of having left my body and all grosser things behind. Then, without any shock of surprise, I plunged neck and heels into a soft drift, alighting, however, without hurt or even a severe concussion.

Buried deep in the snow-drift, I nevertheless, scrambled toward the surface, my first thought being that now we might catch the ram; for instantly I had heard the animal's puffs and snorts as it, too, struggled to get out of the snow-heap. Then I heard my brother also fighting his way upward. We were buried, all of us, to the depth of fifteen or twenty feet in light snow, which had "coned" over the ledge in a conical ridge along its base.

Ferd got to the surface first, going out at the side of the snow-heap. He had alighted almost on top of the ram. As I crawled out into daylight I heard him shouting: "Franz! Franz! Quick, quick! I've got 'im!"

I floundered out to find my brother with both

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hands gripped in the long hair of the sheep's rump, and the big ram, plunging and snorting, sunk to the middle of its sides in the drift.

I scrambled forward and flung myself upon the animal. Then for several minutes we fought valiantly, trying to throw the ram or to hold him for a knife-thrust in neck or heart—for our guns were both buried. We could at once have hacked and maimed the big sheep hopelessly with our hunting-knives, but that would have ruined his skin for mounting.

We got some painful contusions from the stout fellow's heels and horns as we tumbled over and over in the deep snow. Sometimes we were on top and sometimes the ram was. More than once we could have held him down, but the slope of the drift gave him the advantage, and we finally slid, rolled, and tumbled to the base of the snow-heap.

Once his feet touched terra firma, the ram shook us off as he might have shaken off snowflakes. Then, as we rose to our feet, the plucky fellow turned and butted me heavily into the drift. He would have served my brother likewise, but Ferd fell upon his face and lay half-buried in snow. Neither of us dared stir while the ram stood wagging his mighty horns and threatening us in wheezy snorts.

Then, finding he had cowed us to submission, and unable to butt in the snow, the huge buck wheeled and trotted around the ledge without once deigning to stop or look back at us. We scrambled at once for our rifles, but a full hour had passed before we succeeded in uncovering both the guns and our snow-

shoes. We were, too, so nearly snow-blind that we had difficulty in finding our way to camp.

We spent the remainder of the afternoon and evened in fashioning snow-goggles of wood made upon the Eskimo and Indian pattern, and the next morning returned upon our last tracks to take up the trail of the buck.

Now we felt certain of securing our game, provided no snow should fall for several days. We had only to trail the big ram down, wearing him out as he wallowed in deep snows, over which we skimmed with ease. Hardly three hours had passed before we came upon him feeding upon lichens in a rocky gulch.

As he sprang away up a long, steep slope, we emptied the magazines of our repeaters, filling the draw with smoke and the smell of powder. Thirty shots were fired before the ram disappeared over the crest of a ridge, yet not a bullet hit him. The narrow slits in our snow-goggles, which admitted all the light our eyes could bear, were not conducive to accuracy in snap-shooting, especially at creatures in active and erratic motion.

Plainly, we would have to secure a standing shot at the buck; and we took up his trail again, determined to follow with greater caution when his snow-tracks showed particularly fresh.

We did not again see the ram on that day, but he led us in a grand circuit over the mountain steeps. The big sheep seemed all at once to have forsaken the tactics which so often foiled Mr. Conant. At night,

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however, his trail descended toward Owl Creek Valley, and at sundown we left it within half a mile of the shack.

On the following morning the sky was again overcast and there was a thick mist upon the mountain-tops and a distant, monotonous roar, which told of high wind and a fierce blizzard in progress. But the wind did not strike nor the snow drift upon the Owl Creek slopes, so we set out hopefully upon the trail of the ram. Our goggles could not be discarded, and we did not believe the sheep would mount into the region of the storm, which its instinct must yesterday have foretold.

Other animals, too, had been driven into the foothills and wolf-tracks were numerous in the ravines.

At length, as we were following a fresh trail along the rim of a cañon, my brother, in advance, suddenly halted, sank upon his knees and motioned me down behind. Crouching still lower, I crept forward. Ferd turned and spoke in a low voice.

"Careful, Franz!" he said. "There's a sight good for sore eyes down in the draw! Now take a peep down here into this notch."

I peered over the projection of the ledge. At the distance of a hundred yards or so, under the foot of an opposing ledge, a small band of bighorn, headed by the enormous ram, were fighting with a pack of buffalo wolves.

The buck, two ewes and a yearling ram were "standing off" five big gray wolves of the sort that easily pull down cows and well-grown steers. The

ewes and the smaller buck, with their short, sharp horns and keen-edged hoofs, were fighting cautiously and as if wearied from a long tussle with their savage foes.

But the great ram! His fighting was worth a long day's tramp to see. He charged again and again with quick leaps into the midst of the snapping pack, thrusting to right and to left with the keen points of his curved horns, striking savagely with his big hoofs, and wheeling with lightning-like precision back into position as the wolves scattered to gather for a fresh attack.

The vicious brutes were enraged beyond measure, having apparently played too long a waiting and cautious game. Their red lips and white teeth showed wickedly as they snarled and snapped, or flung themselves howling and panting upon the snow. The big-horn buck was making the fight of his life, no doubt, to save the weary, half-exhausted band, for it was evident that he could at any moment have fled alone in safety. Constantly the wolves tried to leap past the bucks—for the young one was a bold and vicious fighter, too—and to fling themselves upon the ewes. Cunning brutes! One would leap at the big ram's front, snapping its teeth in his face, but jump quickly away when it had provoked a charge, while its mates would rush in with fresh attempts to pull down the smaller sheep.

Then would follow some seconds of mad, all-round fighting, until the large ram again sprang, striking viciously among the besiegers. He never failed to



“The big-horn buck making the fight of his life.”

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scatter them and to defend his position in front of the little company. There were blood-spots upon the snow and the largest of the big wolves limped, apparently from a hard stroke upon the shoulder.

For five minutes or more we watched this desperate battle in the cañon notch; then we crept back to take up the trail of the ram, which we knew must lead, by the nearest accessible descent, into the cañon.

We had not more than two hundred yards to go before we slipped down a steep incline to the bottom of the walled-in draw. Here we found the ram's tracks joining the less fresh trail of the smaller sheep, and also the tracks of two wolves which had followed close upon their heels.

We readily understood what had happened. The wolf-pack had played a favorite game in cañon-hunting. Two had lain in hiding at one opening and the rest of the pack at the other. When the ewes and young buck had entered, a signal-yelp had enabled the cunning brutes to close in all together upon the sheep, which had taken their stand in the notch where we had discovered them.

And that noble old ram, in passing, perhaps hours afterward, had discovered their plight and gone to the aid of the besieged! This conclusion was fully confirmed in a later examination of all the trails.

We went forward and crept cautiously into the mouth of the notch, going flat upon our stomachs and trailing our guns in the snow. When we had crawled out from the last sheltering point, to confront the

fighting animals, we were in time for a thrilling scene. There had evidently just occurred a general *mêlée* of the fighters, during which the big ram had pinned a gray wolf upon its back and had jammed a point under the animal's shoulder-blade, inclosing its body wedged within the curve of his horn.

Thus he held the kicking, howling brute, and in the same instant charged upon two wolves which had thrown one of the ewes upon her back and were about to throttle her. The other ewe and the small ram were each chasing a wolf about the trodden ground they had been fighting over.

The big ram easily beat the two wolves off their struggling victim. Then he dashed headlong against projecting rocks, butting, slatting, and striking with fore-hoofs at the kicking brute impaled upon his horn. After these vicious and lightning-like evolutions had been continued for a moment, the ram leaped up, half-turning in the air, and with a mighty sidewise wrench flung the battered carcass of his dead foe upon the snow.

During this sharp struggle the free wolves avoided encounter with the ram and sought again to fasten themselves upon the bleeding ewe; but we had now crawled to within thirty steps of the absorbed fighters, and the double report of our guns ended their battle. One wolf was killed and another mortally hurt by the shots, and sheep and wolves sprang apart in equal affright.

The unhurt wolves charged past us within a dozen steps, but only one got out of the notch. While we

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were shooting the fierce brutes the smaller sheep cowered, huddling together in the shelter of overhanging rocks, but the larger buck, with horns raised high, stood upon the trampled snow staring at us, whistling shrilly through his nostrils and stamping defiantly with his forefeet.

We now stepped back a few paces from the center of the notch, and the small sheep, seeing a widened line of retreat, leaped to the opposite ledge and hurtled by along its base.

Not so the great ram. Left alone, he stood for an instant, still regarding us sternly. Then, with no weaklings to protect, with head lifted high and stately tread, he walked, a noble sight, straight down the center of the notch. His steps were quick and somewhat nervous, and yet his movement was unhurried.

He seemed to say to us: "If you are my enemies, then indeed I am helpless; if you are my friends, you will not harm me."

As he passed within ten yards, he seemed to shrink to half his former size; every coarse, blue-gray hair lay straight down upon his skin, and in the sunken ball and tense expression of his yellow-white eye we read his expectation of instant death.

Shoot that grand, brave animal? Not all the wealth of Mr. Conant could have hired us to harm a hair of him! He walked on, his step quickening to a trot until, without once turning a backward glance, he disappeared behind a point of rocks.

We took the wolf-pelts, returned to camp, and

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finally reached home in time for Christmas dinner, well content to leave the valiant ram to rule in his kingdom. And we know that when the generous Englishman returns he will hunt the Owl Creek big-horn with his camera only.

CALIFORNIA JOE'S PARTNER

CALIFORNIA JOE'S PARTNER

Around our French Creek camp-fires in '75 there were gathered groups of mountaineers and plainsmen of the old régime. We had then no status in the gold-bearing wilderness despite the fact that we had staked claims and paid recorder's fees. Therefore Buckskin Joe, California Joe, Florida Bill, Old Missouri, Felix Michaud, Jacques Boyer and others of us of less picturesque nomenclature and far less fame had time to burn, if time may said to be consumed in that manner. At all events, we burned quantities of tobacco and often we talked and oftener the major part of us listened. Our camp, under the pinnacled rocks of Custer's Gulch, was set in a breathless and solemn wilderness. The caterwauling of a cougar, the surprised "whoof" of the grizzly, the whistle of the startled mule-deer, the clucking call of the pine-hen to her scattered young; these sounds and their like, and the track of various four-foots, were the audible and visible signs of a habitation apparently undisturbed since the eon of the split-hoof horse.

Lounging about the wagons of our Iowa party a group were, one afternoon, discussing Indians and their superstitions—especially the superstitious, or perhaps cowardly dread which had kept the tribes out of the depths of those solemn Black Hills pines. Naturally talk turned upon the comparative courage

of red and white as exemplified in border warfare. In the argument which followed, men of little or no experience generally expressed the opinion that the American aborigine was cowardly by nature. Of this there was evidence enough, they contended, in the deadly ambush, the treachery and general bushwhacking tactics of the race in fighting.

Although appealed to from time to time in confirmation of this or that opinion, California Joe, who was of our number, smoked his pipe in silence. When he finally began to speak it was not to set forth an opinion or to give expression to a sentiment.

“There was my Shoshony partner, now, that I picked up at our North Fork rendyvoo in ’47,” he said, “Sozy—he was an average Indian I reckon, rather under the average as to looks. Sozy was so consummedly humly that he couldn’t git married, not even among the Snakes and Flatheads. I reckon that’s the reason he took to me an’ my ways. I named him Sozy, which isn’t Injun that I know of, because the name seemed to fit his ornery face, somehow; and his Shoshony name, well, that was an extinguisher. It was antepinultimate hog Latin, that no white man could pronounce twice runnin’ with any certainty of ever eatin’ another meal o’ victuals. Sozy was only half Snake. His mother was a Black-foot woman, captured in war, and he spoke her language better, if possible, than he did Shoshony. He knew the country to north of the Yellow Stone like a school-boy knows his reader and that is principally the reason why I took him with me in ’48, upon the

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Yellow Water, which is a little branch of the Mussel-shell.

“We took beaver for a season there and had good ground left which we concluded to hold for another fall. When summer put in I went to Fort Union with our pelts. While I was there I traded for three Colt's six-shooters out of the first shipment of that kind of guns to come up the Missouri. They were the first repeaters I had seen and I was mightily tickled with them. I would have taken a dozen if McKenzie would have spared 'em, for I knew the mountain men would want the guns whenever I should run up against a company again.

“Sozy wasn't long in learning to handle the one I gave to him, when I got back. He was, if anything, more tickled with the weapon than myself. ‘Shoot Oglalla a heap; shoot Sikasapi a heap’; he would say, grinning with delight, as he rubbed the cylinder of his gun with bear's grease, ‘shoot buffalo a heap, all same more better like bow and arrow.’

“Early in September, or thereabouts, we went to the foot-hills of Big Snowy to kill elk for our winter's supply of meat. Of course buffalo would be runnin' south soon, but there never was much of a buffalo's carcass that agreed with my stomach, and the wastefulness of coverin' an acre or two o' ground with dead critters, for the sake of tongue and tenderline, always went agin the grain with me. I was never guilty of slaughterin' God's critters for fun, either. I never hired out to any dukes or nabobs to blow his innocent four-foots off the earth, an' I never will.

“We hadn’t seen any buffalo that season, so far, but on the fourth or fifth day of our hill huntin’ we saw ’em come up on the prairie in countless herds. I’ve never seen so many critters of any kind, before or since. We were well up on the mountains and could look down upon a heap of country. And yet there seemed a misty about the way those cattle appeared. They popped suddenly out of creek valleys and the heads of coulees in dark, moving lines an’ blotches and spread until the mind got tired in tryin’ to conceive of their number.

“Well, we thought best to git back to our camp an’ ponies on the Flat Willow, an’ so we pulled our freight immediately. We got to camp before it was overrun with herds, but the Blackfeet had come with the buffaloes and our five ponies were gone; also their ropes an’ picket pins an’ our blankets and camp truck. We soon discovered that a single Injun had done the whole business an’ that was the reason we hadn’t been laid for an’ bushwhacked. Sozy was a hard looker, as I’ve said, even when he was sober and good-natured. Ordinarily, but for his horse-tail hair an’ pig’s eyes, his peeked for’ead and copperas skin, he’d have been taken for a fat guzzler of hop drinks. But the devil, pitted with smallpox, would have looked handsome beside of Sozy when he found the Blackfoot’s moccasin tracks. He made pizen medicine agin the maker of ’em. Rather late in the day, it struck me, but Sozy was all Injun. When he got through with his contortions, an’ shakin’ of his medicine clout, he became as cam an’ placid as if nothing had happened.

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"He spoke in Shoshony, which I understood. 'This is very bad,' said he, quite as if he was offerin' me information. 'This will make the feet weary until we can take horses of the Bloods and Piegans. Younger brother, we shall have to kill some of those people.' 'Well, then, come lets do it,' I said. I was young and very much incensed, and quite ready for a desperate enterprise. We returned on foot an' cautiously, to our shack lodge, on the Yellow Water, where our traps, ammunition, and extra firearms were cached. So far the shack, which was hidden in a thicket of river ash, had escaped the Blackfeet's detection.

"We now prepared ourselves for a scouting expedition. We both wore Shoshony dress, but Sozy spent a few hours of the night a-patching and fringing and easily changed our shift to Blackfoot gear. We tied our hair in Sarcee pattern. I wore no beard in those days an' my skin was tanned blacker, if anything, than Sozy's. A little yellow earth fixed me to pass an ordinary inspection. Fixed up in that fashion, and wearing the new Colts under our shirt flaps, we set out on foot in the morning. We scouted along the river and among the coulees as though we were stalkin' the buffalo. It didn't take us long to discover that the country was overrun with Bloods an' Piegans. They'd already chased the buffalo pretty well back from the stream. Nevertheless we hadn't walked two miles until we met a party of Bloods—it was Sozy who knew the difference in tribes—an' they passed us, a dozen of 'em, within a hundred yards. It was a trying minute for me, but

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I followed Sozy's lead. He turned indifferently towards a coulee on our right an' the party rode on payin' us no attention. We saw other parties of horsemen and foot-hunters presently and avoided 'em in the same careless fashion, among the breaks and gullies.

"Before night we had located a big village of Bloods and another of Piegans. These camps were on the bottom an' not more than a mile apart. We lay close in covert and watched hunting parties an' squaw packers come in loaded with meat. About sundown, too, we saw another big band of Injuns come into the valley on the east an' make camp two or three miles below the Bloods.

"I saw that Sozy was mightily tickled at this, although I confess I couldn't guess the reason an' it seemed to me our chance o' gittin' out of that hornet's nest wasn't any too good. Accordin' to my reckoning we'd played in uncommon good luck that day and ought, in all reason, to have lost our scalps before night.

"'Brother, we shall take horses of these people to-night,' said my partner. Now there was a right smart of ponies, especially around the Piegan lodges, but they were all tethered close in an' the outlook for a mount didn't seem to me promising. I knew there would be prowling guards and sharp eyes on the look-out among those herds.

"But when darkness had fairly settled down, Sozy got up out of the grass bold as a lion. 'Come, brother, let us go among those Piegan folks,' says he, as cool as though we were goin' a-fishing. Not knowing

exactly what he intended I thought I could go anywhere that he dared to venture. The night was cloudy and so far favorable. We got pretty close to the Piegan village and stopped to take observations. Against the light of plenty of campfires we could see guards moving about among the ponies, evidence that the Blackfeet were on the look-out there at the edge of the Sioux country. At their village things were lively. Everybody seemed to be having a big time in the midst of peace an' piles of meat. Squaws were busy with fleshing knives, yawpin' back an' forth at each other. Two or three fellows were beating tomtoms and makin' some kind of lugubrious squeelin' music. Most of the hunters had laid down in their lodges, dead tired, but young fellows were having all sorts of frolic.

"'Younger brother,' said Sozy, 'we must now go among these Piegans. If any see we are strangers they'll think we're visitors of the Bloods. We must go as the young men do, leaping at play.' It seemed a crazy thing to do, but I couldn't seem to be a coward and so, laying our rifles on the knoll we'd been standing on, we approached the Piegan village with perfect assurance. Sozy chanted some snatches in Blackfoot an' we pulled an' hauled each other about roughly as we passed in among the horses. I knew that so long as there was nothin' suspicious in our appearance, the Injuns wouldn't interrupt us while we seemed to be engaged wholly with each other. An' that was what Sozy was counting on.

"An Indian stalking among the ponies passed us,

paying no attention to our capers. That was encouragin'. On we went, chasin' each other to an' fro as other young men were doing among the lodges. All the time we kept a sharp lookout for the best line of retreat when we should leap upon ponies an' fly as I expected we'd have to do if we got away with a mount. Well, we tumbled into the midst of the Piegan lodges in a roarin' good humor.

" 'Who are you?' a saucy young squaw asked, as we stumbled among her tepee stakes.

" 'Sarcees,' said Sozy, an' his matter o' fact statement must have satisfied her, for we saw her pointing us out an' talking an' laughing with some of her friends, a minute later. No others paid us any curious attention and presently we set down on the creek bank and talked together in low tones.

" 'My friend,' says Sozy, 'you saw the tepee of the two hunters who slept—it was open. They have no women. We shall take their bridles and ride the horses of those men. Theirs are the horses nearest their lodge.' We talked on in undertones until most of the Injuns' camp-fires had died down to embers; then we got up an' walked carelessly, in a round-about way, until we'd come to the open tepee of the two hunters. Sozy went in an' I followed. The tired Blackfeet were both lyin' on their backs breathing like quarter horses. Flickerin' embers in front threw a faint light inside. We sat down and smoked Kinnikinick for awhile. I could see Sozy's pig-eyes gleam in the firelight; they seemed a burning inside with a hell-glow of dare-deviltry.

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“Presently my partner gathered up two bridles which lay near the tepee’s fire hole and we passed out, walkin’ toward the nearest ponies, just as though we owned ’em. It was too dark for the sharpest eyes to make out figures at more than a few yards distant. Sozy, fat an’ stocky though he was, was mounted in ten seconds, with lariat hauled in an’ ready to go. But my horse gave me plenty of trouble. The half-wild critter began to go backward before I’d got it bridled. I hung on intending to cut the pony’s rope when I’d mounted and git out of town the best way I could. But the little rascal backed up agin the tepee of its owner, an’ before I could make up my mind to let go a pair of sinewy arms jerked me backward off my feet.

“As I struggled to git out of his grip, the Piegan yelled like a hellyan an’ before I could break loose we were surrounded by a crowd of excited bucks. The rascals went for me like a parcel of wolves. They pushed an’ hauled an’ crowded each other to git at the horse-stealer whose boldness must have excited their envy whatever they might have thought of his judgment.

“I fought like a caged tiger. I tried to git at my guns, but some fellow, during the mêlée, got his hands under my shirt and jerked both weapons out of their holsters. Then I went down under the mob, an my hands were tied up in a jiffy. Two or three of the howling pack now grabbed me by the feet and began hauling me toward their fires.

“What would have happened me shortly is easily

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guessed, but the attention of my captors was just then drawn to a more serious matter. Their village was attacked from the prairie side. Bang! bang! bang! a succession of shots was fired that rattled like the volley of a troop. An Injun was hit an' fell across my legs. One or two more went to the ground, and the Piegiens hustled for their weapons.

"Crack, crack, crack, came the shots, so close at hand I could smell the powder, an' I knew that Sozy, my gallant Shoshony, was making a diversion in my behalf. He'd rushed in among the Piegiens who were downing me; had mixed with 'em in the darkness an' got away with my Colts. An' now he was banging at 'em with a vim and a relish that was good to hear an' feel.

"The flight of the bucks for their guns left me free use of my feet, an' I gained them in a jump an' ran for dear life toward the blaze of Sozy's pistols. The Shoshony met me in the tall grass an' thrust my revolvers, hot with firing, into my belt. He cut my hands free and we slashed the ropes of the nearest manageable ponies an' mounted in hot haste.

"While the Piegiens were in a furor, getting ready to repel an attack upon their village, we made a dash across the Yellow Water and into the breaks toward Fort Union, where we arrived two days later, minus rifles an' traps, but thankful to have saved our hair."

The silence which fell upon our group, when this famous old frontiersman had finished his simple narrative, was suggestive.

THE EXPLOIT OF
ANTOINE AND PIERRE

THE EXPLOIT OF ANTOINE AND PIERRE

This is the true story of the exploit of Antoine and Pierre Le Beau, lads who were born in the little French-Indian village of La Saussaie. Their father, Baptiste Le Beau, was a peltry-trader, and their mother a half-blood Mandan woman.

Pierre was two years the older, and inherited much of the Indian nature. Antoine was more like the French, and clever also. Therefore he was sent away to school, in St. Louis, where he remained until his father was killed, an accidental victim in a fight between Red Dog's and Three Feathers' bands of Bois-Brulés.

Antoine found that during the four years of his absence the fur trade had been ruined. Settlers and stockmen had come into the country across the river from La Saussaie. He found Charbonneau, his father's partner, in possession of the store, and his mother and Pierre with nothing left them save a few ponies, the log house they lived in and the Indian title to a tract of land above the village.

Although but fifteen years old, Antoine, thrifty and clever, saw his opportunity in the control of the land, which included some excellent grazing-ground.

The stockmen across the river had large droves of horses and cattle, and they were already crowded for room. So Antoine took horses to herd. He succeeded in gathering three hundred during the first

spring and received two dollars per head for the season. He lost but two out of this "bunch," and the animals did so well that more than five hundred were placed in his charge the following year.

So the Le Beaus were again highly important among the people of mixed blood at La Saussaie. Pierre wore the gayest of blanket jackets, lived merrily and sometimes amused himself by going fishing. He loafed much in Charbonneau's dingy store, which smelled of hides, dried fish and stale tobacco.

Now it happened one chilly morning, when Antoine had come in to warm his hands by Charbonneau's fire, that a couple of young men from the settlements were in the store seeking to buy rope and blankets.

"This old rope—no good," said Pierre, as one of the newcomers stooped to examine a coil upon the floor. "My brudder Antoine, hees buy some of dat rope las' summer, and de knots dey rot off hees picket-pins."

At this Charbonneau flew into a rage, called Pierre some hard names in French and ordered him out of the store. Then, as Pierre merely grinned, Charbonneau rushed at him and flung him violently upon the floor.

Antoine's French-Indian blood got the upper hand of his school-training at this. He seized the irate trader by the beard, thrust a pistol in his face and said such emphatic things that Charbonneau's legs shook like willows in the wind and his customers left in alarm.

Charbonneau begged pardon and Antoine's wrath

EXPLOIT OF ANTOINE AND PIERRE

quickly subsided. The lad was rather ashamed, in fact, for he knew Pierre had been impertinent in talking to customers about Charbonneau's goods.

The matter would have ended amicably but for Charbonneau's Ogalalla wife, who was of a temper quite as choleric as her husband and far more steadfast. She was greatly enraged when she learned that Charbonneau had been taken by the beard, which she seemed to consider a most humiliating thing. It made her despise Charbonneau and thirst for revenge on Antoine.

When the first warm days came after the going out of the ice, Madame Charbonneau gathered her small effects and departed in a canoe with her children, a well-grown boy and girl. This little family paddled far down the Missouri and thence up White River to the big Ogalalla towns.

Whether the angry squaw-wife appealed more signally to the spirit of revenge or of cupidity among her friends is not quite clear, but certain it is that shortly after her appearance among them a party of Ogalallas set out across the great stretch of plain to the northward, descended upon Antoine's horse-corral one night in June and drove off all the herded stock.

Antoine had built his corrals a mile above the village. As these horses were under "sacred medicine" and in charge of "one of the blood," there was no danger that they would be stolen by Cheyennes, Gros Ventres or other tribes of the upper reserve. Another and final element of safety lay in the fact that most of the horses were of a large breed not much in use,

except for meat, among the Sioux. Thus Antoine had felt doubly secure in leaving the animals at night unguarded in the corrals. He could not watch all night and work all day and Pierre could not be depended on for guard duty.

On the morning of his loss he rode home from the broken corrals with despair in his heart. His occupation and his reputation were gone unless he could recover the stock. The owners of the herd and other whites across the river would not hesitate to accuse him of having a hand in such a wholesale robbery, unless he could prove his innocence absolutely, nor would they trust him with any more horses.

It was barely daylight, so early was he out of a morning, when Antoine aroused his mother and Pierre. The woman immediately took a canoe and paddled across the river to warn the owners of the stolen horses. As for Pierre, he suddenly awoke to the importance of doing something. His Indian blood was aroused and he readily joined Antoine in an arduous chase after the horse thieves.

Sunrise saw the brothers well mounted and galloping hard to westward. The broad trail of the herd led straight away toward the Bad Lands of the Little Missouri. Evidently the animals had been taken from their corrals in the early night and were being pushed hard, for, when the pursuers had mounted the bluffs above the Missouri, they saw no cloud of dust upon the miles and miles of nearly level plain. At night they passed down into the valley of Thunder Creek, which marked the limit of the country they knew.

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They camped on this creek, nearly seventy miles from home.

They were up and off again at break of day, and night brought them to the breaks of the Bad Lands—warm, at last, upon the trail of the stolen stock. Hitherto they had passed three camps where the Ogalallas—more than twenty, as the brothers had made out by the sign—had halted to rest and graze the stock, and at one of them the skull and freshly picked bones of a horse were found.

Just before sunset the brothers rode to the summit of a red butte and looked back over their trail. Were the stockmen following the stolen horses? On all the vast stretch of sun-baked plain there was not the slightest cloud or trail of dust to cheer the boys with hope of aid from the settlements. In another direction lay rough ridges of chalk cliffs and a narrow, gorge-like valley cast in forbidding shadows. At some point or turn in that tortuous, fading cañon, the stolen horses would be guarded for the night. But dared any two pursuers venture their lives in that narrow pass?

Did the brothers turn back? Did the lazy Pierre, dust-begrimed, choked by thirst, and half-famished from a slender diet of dry, chipped beef, want to go home? Not he. The Sioux's persistence and the white man's boldness had seized upon the lads and urged them on to a deed almost incredibly daring, yet planned with great shrewdness.

From the appearance of the trail below they knew the stock-thieves were some two hours' ride in advance,

and that they would go into camp soon after dark. So, with plans already formed, the two rode down the red bluff into the narrow valley.

Upon reaching the creek—a swift, shallow stream—they turned their ponies loose, quenched their thirst, and immediately set out to search the banks. They found a bog-hole where were tufts of old, dry grass, which had escaped the fall fires. Of this they gathered enough for their purpose.

With dry twigs and bark of willows they twisted dry-grass ropes some two inches in diameter and half the length of a lariat. To prevent these ropes from untwisting they tied them here and there with interlacing twine.

This task finished, the brothers ate some stringy chips of dried meat and stretched themselves on the ground for an hour or so of rest.

Thus refreshed, they remounted and rode leisurely and cautiously along the trail. Turn after turn of the narrow valley was made. They moved in a silence broken only by the light footfalls of their ponies. Their animals were kept at the shuffling, nearly noiseless trot characteristic of the Indian-bred pony.

On either hand loomed the chalk cliffs; fringes of cottonwoods and willows marked the crooked channel of the creek. The trail, a broad swath in the thin, tall grass of the bottom lands, was easily followed.

The thieves were depending upon their advantage in start, their celerity of movement and the unlikelihood of pursuit except from fort or settlement. This

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they hoped to elude finally among the intricacies of the Bad Lands.

Leaving the trail, the boys hugged the little stream, keeping well within the shadows of its bordering trees. It was after midnight that the rustling murmur they had listened for came to their ears. Quite plainly now they could hear the trampling of a herd, hungrily cropping the coarse, thin grass. But no fires, no sign of Indians or of horses could be seen in the night.

The brothers dismounted and led their ponies deeper within the shadows of a cluster of cottonwoods. They stripped the animals of saddles and bridles and turned them loose. Each then wound his surcingle and grass rope about his body and slid softly down the ditch-like bank of the creek.

They left their saddles under the trees and carried their rolled blankets under their arms. They followed the creek channel, hugging the bank, half creeping on the shore or wading in the water with great caution where there was no foothold on land.

The creek channel led them, by a curve, within the shadows of overhanging cliffs, and they knew the Indians were encamped in this bend. Sounds of the herd grew more distinct, and they were creeping with greater caution, when a loud, familiar whinny broke upon their ears, then yells of Indians and a brief clatter of hoofs.

What Antoine and Pierre had calculated upon had happened. Their own ponies had come on and joined the herd. There had been a momentary alarm as the animals had passed Indian guards and camp. In the

darkness there was little danger that the incident would excite suspicion. The savages would simply conclude that the ponies had strayed and returned, or had been left behind in some shelter of brush or trees.

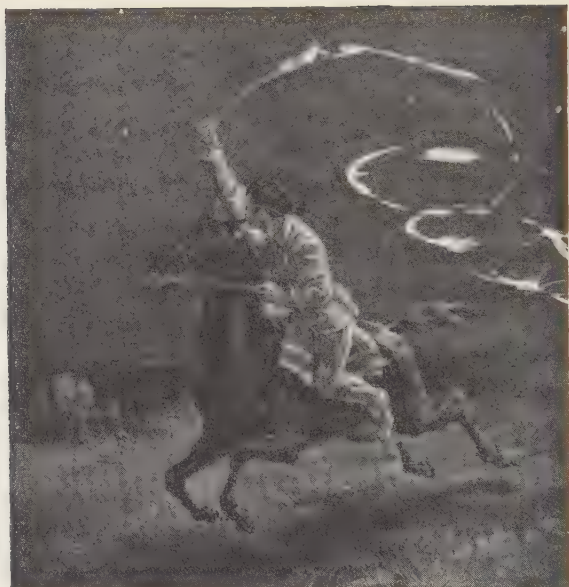
In the meantime the lads had discovered the Sioux's camp and their first outpost. Fortunately, horse-stealers do not allow dogs to follow them, and Antoine and Pierre were in no danger of discovery from these sentinel pests of an ordinary Indian camp.

Thanks to the shelter of the creek bank and its fringe of willows, they passed the camp in safety. The horses were farther on. Presently the brothers ascended the creek bank upon the grass land and were in the midst of the grazing herd. They walked carelessly among the animals, talking in low tones and in the Sioux tongue, which they spoke with a perfect accent.

They were some time in finding riding-ponies among the herd. At last, by cautious and friendly advance, each secured a pony, bridled the animal, strapped his blanket upon its back, and mounted. They rode together boldly along the creek bank. As they passed the limits of the herd a Sioux arose from the grass a few yards distant and hailed them. Antoine replied.

"We go to the hills," he said, gruffly, "to look for pursuers when light comes."

The Indian grunted approval and the riders passed on leisurely. This simple, bold proceeding, and the noise and confusion of the stamping, snorting herd, saved an alarm. Its success, and the knowledge that the Indians were herding their booty unmounted,



“Pierre rode like one possessed, and yelled like a veritable war-fiend.”

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filled Pierre and Antoine with elation. The Sioux, as they had hoped, were giving all of their ponies complete rest for the night.

The daring riders passed on down the valley until they were well out of sight and hearing of the herd. They then hobbled their ponies and flung themselves upon the grass. Here they waited, resting and talking in subdued voices, until that darkest hour which comes before dawn. Then they remounted, uncoiled their grass ropes and rode back toward the herd. They approached, riding cautiously, until warned by coughing snorts that the horses were near at hand.

There was no longer the noise of trampling feet—the herd was lying at rest. So much the better for the plan the boys had adopted; a plan simple and bold, requiring dash and courage beyond ordinary conception. They were to stampede this herd of five hundred horses and to ride at its heels directly through and over an Indian camp. Truly, it was to be neck or nothing with them! They rode a dozen rods apart and halted. They scratched matches under the cover of their horses' flanks, and lighted the frayed ends of their grass ropes.

In the next instant Antoine fired his revolver in air, and with shrill, terrifying whoops the daring fellows rode at top speed directly at the sleeping herd. They whirled their lighted rope-ends, fanned to flame as their animals ran, and rushed in upon a startled crowd of horses, encircled in hissing, writhing coils of fire.

Pierre rode like one possessed, and yelled like a

veritable war-fiend. As the herd broke away in his front he ran plump upon an Indian guard.

The Sioux was directly in advance, and running, but turned to shoot. As he did so Pierre, whirling his fire-rope, swept the blazing end directly into the savage's face, thrust out a foot, and left him sprawling and blinded in the grass.

Then there was a wild and most exciting rout. The whole herd of horses fled like mad things before those circling, shrieking snakes of fire.

Despite a mob of yelling Indians, aroused from their blankets and rushing frantically hither and thither, the horses, gathered in a flying mass, swept resistlessly on, taking their own back trail instinctively.

Antoine and Pierre galloped into the Sioux camp ground, riding at the heels of the herd in a smothering cloud of dust. They were fired upon by several Sioux whom they nearly ran down as they came together at the tail of the herd; but bullets aimed chiefly at whirling streaks of fire, and in dust and darkness, went wide, and the daring stampeders came off without a scratch.

They yelled and whirled their fire-ropes until those effective torches had burned nearly to their finger-ends. When that happened they were beyond the Sioux camp and had the whole herd—with twenty-odd Ogalalla ponies beside—in front of them, going like the wind. A score of disconsolate Sioux bucks were left to make their way on foot to the Niobrara country.

Four days later the French-Indian boys drove the

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recovered stock, minus four or five head, killed and strayed, down the bluffs of La Saussaie.

The owners of the stock had not thought it worth while to follow the Indians, but they were delighted with the exploit of Antoine and Pierre. Even the lazy brother was a man of consequence thereafter and was allowed to assist in looking after the herd.

This recapture of stolen stock was a piece of daring so admired by the most renowned Sioux braves that even Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull always spoke of the Le Beau boys with some envy and great respect.

SANDVIG AND ST. XAVIER

SANDVIG AND ST. XAVIER

When Hercules Dousman was chief factor for the Astor Company at Prairie du Chien, he used frequently to tell the story of Sandvig and St. Xavier, who were perhaps as oddly assorted a pair of friends and partners as ever got together.

They were trappers. Ole Sandvig was a flax-haired Norse giant who stood six feet four in his moccasins, weighed over two hundred pounds and had not an ounce of flesh to spare. Denis St. Xavier was a dwarf in size, black as an Indian, and bow-legged as a *voyageur* boatman. Ole was the soul of good humor; Denis was choleric and at times rashly abusive. Both, however, were of undoubted courage, and more than once the hot-headed little French-Canadian was rescued from the perils of a dangerous quarrel by the prowess and vast strength of his big partner.

There had been a protracted and severe drought in the upper Mississippi country and the smaller streams and lakes had all gone dry. Fur-bearing creatures were driven in upon the large streams and the Mississippi itself became prime trapping-ground for gathering beaver, muskrat, mink and otter pelts. As there was little snow for several winters, many of the trappers made their daily rounds upon skates, and thus covered a wide extent of territory.

During the last of these dry years Sandvig and St.

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Xavier chose trapping-grounds some fifty miles below Prairie du Chien and above the mouth of an Iowa river. There were, as these trappers believed, no Indians wintering nearer than the villages of the Sacs and Foxes some distance away, and they put out long lines of traps without attempt at concealment.

One night in November there came a "dry freeze" which scaled the Mississippi over with glare ice, and when, on the following day, the trappers went their rounds on skates, both were much astonished and mystified to find that every trap had been stolen on each bank of the river.

When they compared experiences at night, they came to the conclusion that Indians must be lurking in the neighborhood. On the next morning they skated down the Mississippi to the mouth of the little river some miles below their shack, and there discovered traces of two canoes which had evidently broken through a thin scum of ice in making their way up-stream.

Instantly the mystery of the stolen traps was solved. Indians had, early on the night of the first freeze, gathered the whole "line." In returning in their canoes, they had found the mouth of the small stream thinly covered with ice.

St. Xavier broke out in a frightful temper, and to Ole's advice that they secure aid from the trappers up the river he would not listen. What were five, six, ten pilfering Indians, he asked, that two good men should fear them? Had not Baptiste Le Bon gone alone to Wabasha's Sioux village after his stolen

gun, and didn't he make them give it up? Well, then!

And so the two skated on up the little river in search of the thieves.

And they ran quite suddenly upon an Indian village of newly built lodges—a dozen or fifteen of them—upon a marsh island formed by an arm, or broad bayou, of the river. The lodges were of woven willow built in a marsh of tall corn-stalk grass, with closely tied bundles of which they were heavily thatched. They were protected from fires by the watercourses and from the winds of winter by the thick fringes of willows.

The trappers boldly approached this Iowa town, walking up a narrow path where the swaying corn-stalk tops brushed Ole Sandvig's shoulders.

But when, on arriving at the lodge of the chief, they found that Conkey John, a notorious Musquakie scallawag, was "head man," they abandoned all hope of immediately recovering their traps. Only the summer before, at "The Prairie," St. Xavier had offended this redoubtable scoundrel by telling him some emphatic truths about his dishonorable career.

Nevertheless, the trappers boldly entered Conkey John's tepee and demanded their traps and pelts. Conkey John's answer was characteristic of that wily thief. The fellow had picked up, somehow, a fair smattering of English.

"Ho! You tlaps?" he inquired. "Heap Sac up libber (river). He go by las' night. Him have many tlap; heap muslat; heap skin."

The trappers knew Conkey John lied, for his shrewdly twinkling eyes betrayed his appreciation of their certitude.

St. Xavier poured forth a torrent of angry threats, until Sandvig, dragging him from the lodge, compelled him to be quiet. There was nothing for it but to return to Prairie du Chien empty-handed, and the sensible Norwegian wished to make a prudent retreat from so dangerous a nest of freebooters.

A wind, which had risen that morning, had increased to a gale, and was blowing directly in their faces as the trappers put on their skates at the lower extremity of the island. Ole Sandvig cast several furtive glances behind him and cocked his gun. When he had securely fastened his skates, the Norseman rose to peer over the tops of the waving grass.

At the same moment St. Xavier's rifle cracked. Sandvig turned to see that the angry Frenchman had fired into a thick tuft of grass. Instantly Ole darted forward to smother the first tiny shoot of flame, but the wily Denis tripped him, and both men sprawled on the ice.

Before Sandvig could regain his feet, flames, blown upon by the high wind, leaped higher than his head.

"Now come!" he shouted angrily at his mate. "Vey sall bote be killed, oder vey skate mighty fast already!"

But St. Xavier could not skate at all. In the collision with Sandvig he had broken a runner. He was already unbuckling his useless skates. He looked up, grinning ruefully.

“De las’ of St. Xavier,” he said. “Ole, you geet out of dis.”

The big Norwegian glared at his audacious partner for an instant while the flames crackled and roared inland. “De onliest time,” St. Xavier used to say afterward, “dat ever I see Ole Sandvig mad.”

Ole wasted no words in his wrath. He flung off his greasy leather coat, cut off the sleeves, and ripped them into string. Then he seized the little Frenchman, bundled him into the armless garment, and made the live package fast to his belt behind. Then, leaving both their guns upon the ice, he skated away into the teeth of the wind.

Thus helplessly dragged, St. Xavier looked back to see the Indian town already ablaze and the helpless Musquakies, men, women and children, running out upon the ice. Now that he had time to reflect, he doubted if, with his short legs and heavy body, he could even have skated away from those Indians. Some of them would of course cross the V-shaped peninsula between the rivers to throw themselves across Ole’s path and others would follow directly upon his trail.

Ole was a magnificent skater, but St. Xavier knew himself to be a heavy drag. He wished he had clung to his gun and made Ole save himself.

The big Norseman bent against the fierce wind and plied his skates with might and main. If only he might make the turn, some three or four miles distant, and get started with the wind before those Indians should cross the neck! That was Ole’s sole hope of escape.

Not once did the swift skater look behind. Bent almost double, he turned curve after curve of the river, and the helpless St. Xavier slipped and slewed, and sometimes rolled over and over at his heels. A half-hour's struggle against the fierce gale left Ole pretty well blown when the turn came; and even then he dared not abate his tremendous exertion. He skated almost at the speed of the gale for two miles or more.

Then, in emerging from an island channel, the skater saw that his long and exhausting burst of speed had been without avail.

The fleet-footed Musquakie runners were ahead of him. Ranged across the ice-channel, a score of Indians stood ready to converge their line upon any point at which he might aim. And owing to the great drought, the channel was less than a quarter of a mile in width.

At first Ole was inclined to turn back and race against the wind again. Then his shrewd eyes, running along the row of clearly outlined figures, noted that the Indians were armed, if armed at all, with their knives only. Seeing that he and St. Xavier had discarded their guns, they had themselves raced across the neck in lightest running gear; and so Sandvig, gathering his energies for a mighty burst of speed, bore down upon the left wing of the enemy. Their center and right swung about in a sliding, scrambling semicircle to close in upon him.

Instead of attempting to dodge the gathering knot in his front, Sandvig dove straight at the group. He



“He tore through the crowd of savages like a cannon ball.”

knocked two Indians out of his path, and tore through the crowd of savages like a cannon-ball. Nevertheless, he felt an extra tug at his rope, and glancing behind, saw that an Indian was clinging to one of St. Xavier's feet.

Ole then gave himself up for lost. His speed was greatly retarded by this fresh clog and a horde of yelling Indians was at his heels. But St. Xavier drew the sliding Indian toward him by simply doubling his legs, and then delivered a kick with his free foot, which, being well directed, rid him of his incubus.

Nevertheless, Ole, tired and breathless, was now no more than a match for the Indian runners. These were clad only in shirts and leggings, and, almost as sure-footed as the skater, leaped and slid on their moccasins now almost as fast as the tired trapper on his steel runners.

At the end of another quarter-hour the pursuers were running like a persistent wolf-pack close upon Ole's heels. Ten or twelve of them were so close that a single mishap would pile them, in a vengeful heap, upon Ole and St. Xavier.

As for the Frenchman, he found some satisfaction in shouting defiance at the Musquakies. Having one free arm, he also flourished at them a knife which he held ready, at the last extremity, to cut the thong above his head and thus leave Ole free to fight or save himself if he should choose.

The Indians made no answer to St. Xavier's revilings. Like the skater, they bent every energy upon

winning the hotly contested race, for they were pricked on by the keenest of savage incentives—the lust for revenge. Even when one fell forward upon all fours, as now and then happened, the fierce wind and his own impetus bore him forward until, catlike, he had regained his feet without perceptible loss of speed.

Thus the race continued; then, in turning an island, the skater caught the glimmer of an almost imperceptible line of white blisters, or ice-bubbles, a hundred yards in front of him. There, he knew, was a streak of thin ice where a swift cross-current ran round the island bars. He had already avoided several such air-holes, but now he continued straight on.

He slackened his speed until a dozen or more of the Indians were almost upon him. These were gripping their knives for a final and desperate rush when the cunning skater darted aside at a sharp angle, avoiding the ice-bubbles by a dangerous margin.

The ice cracked under him, and St. Xavier's heels actually broke through as Sandvig, quartering the wind in a mighty swoop, shot past the thin strip in a flight like that of a wheeling hawk.

The Indians saw their danger, but too late. In vain they flung themselves upon their faces or their backs in the hope to slide over the cracking ice. The foremost broke through in a twinkling, and, one after another, a dozen plumped into the widening breach and floundered up to their armpits and necks in a freezing current.

St. Xavier howled with joy. Ole Sandvig, too,

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stopped at a safe distance to get his breath and then to indulge in a great Norse roar of laughter.

The pursuit was effectively checked. The stalled Musquakies had, in fact, hard enough work to save their lives. Sandvig and St. Xavier were a mile away when the last one was fished out over the bending, breaking ice.

The trappers reached Prairie du Chien that evening and there Sandvig cut loose from his partnership with St. Xavier. He declared he would have nothing further to do with such a venturesome fool.

“Nevertheless,” Dousman was wont to add, “after Denis had moped about the fort for several months, like a love-sick and disappointed squaw, the two went off together again.”

THE BULLET-MAKER'S
S T R A T E G Y

THE BULLET-MAKER'S S T R A T E G Y

Young Jean Marie Du Bois was the first white man to manufacture lead near the famous Fever River. In his early 'teens Jean served as apprentice to a gunsmith in Lyons, France, and before his majority as a non-commissioned officer in the French army.

Then he came to this country—straight to the Mississippi frontier. Not long afterward he was engaged in making bullets and mending guns at a point on the river below the French and Indian rendezvous at Prairie du Chien.

In the lead regions near St. Louis, the French, Spanish and Indians had, in a crude way, mined for and smelted ore for more than half a century. This product found its way by various water courses to the Great Lakes. And this is exactly the reason why the British and their Indian allies invaded the upper Mississippi country in 1780-81. This they did by two water routes, and at least one expedition returned laden with lead, many scalps and some prisoners.

The trade of Jean Du Bois had flourished finely until the coming of the British in these raids. In the spring of 1780 a fleet of Mackinaw boats, manned by red-coats and Winnebagoes, passed down the river and ravaged the country of the Sacs and Foxes, who were allies of the French. They missed Du Bois, probably passing him in the night on their way down, but on the return, British boats anchored off shore

and battered down his rough stone walls with small cannon.

Jean escaped into the woods and the enemy, well freighted, were content to pass on, leaving his small "works" a wreck. When they were gone, the lone bullet-maker set to work ruefully and repaired his damaged house and workshop.

He now bethought him seriously of his lonely life, and especially of his need of interested allies in time of war. Below him, some days' journey upon the river, were villages of Sacs and Foxes. He now went among these Indians and narrated his losses—not so great as their own—at the hands of the "Inglis" and Winnebagoes. He remained some time among their lodges and finally married the Young Corn, a Sac girl, and took her brother, Bobadeesha, to live with them.

The Sacs and Foxes, to whom he gave generous supplies of bullets, promised to watch the river closely in the future and to give him timely warning of the approach of mutual enemies.

Du Bois passed a winter pleasantly with his young wife and the Indian lad for helpers. The Young Corn and Bobadeesha dug for the chunks of ore which Jean smelted. The brother and sister were much delighted when they could fetch, from their badger-like drifts into the hills, great lumps of galena as big as they could carry.

This labor left Du Bois free to work at his molds and at his forge in repairing old Northwest guns and fowling-pieces which had been placed in his hands by

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traders, *voyageurs*, and woodsmen at Prairie du Chien. And there was, of course, the burning of charcoal to assist in this business.

The high waters of spring came and went and the bullet-maker was preparing for his annual trip to Prairie du Chien, when a Sac runner came across country from the Fox River to warn him of the approach of a fleet of British and Winnebagoes. The main body of Sac and Fox warriors, said the runner, had gone to the far north to strike the Menominees. Himself had followed with a small party and, while upon the trail of their fellows, they had discovered the coming boats—ten or more of them. There was no time to follow and fetch back the war parties, so he had run night and day to warn Du Bois and to save the women and children of the villages below.

Jean fed the runner and bade him haste on his errand. The Young Corn then asked her husband if they, too, should not go and hide themselves with her people.

“We can as well hide here,” said Du Bois, and the obedient wife composedly accepted his dictum. Du Bois now spent some time in deep meditation, sitting outside his storehouse and looking upon the broad river. Then he reached a decision and set to work. He felled two sound hard-wood trees, peeled and shaped the trunks to resemble cannon, burned a smooth bore into them and charred them black. From some old gun-barrels he forged hoops of iron and belted one of his log cannons solidly from breech to muzzle.

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This one he loaded with a pound or so of powder and slugs and fired the piece without bursting it. At short range he saw that it might be made to do execution without too great danger to himself.

The Young Corn and her brother looked upon the great guns with much amazement but, Indian like, awaited his explanation of their purpose. They were more than ever astonished when he unfolded his plan to them. They had listened to many tales of brave exploits, told in the lodges of the Sacs and Foxes, but never of such a deed as this master of the stone house and maker of guns proposed.

When Du Bois told them they were to stand by the big gun while he aimed and fired it, and again in the face of the enemy, they were speechless. But they obeyed without flinching at the test. It was now nearly time for the hostile fleet to arrive; so, in his bateau, Du Bois and his small force repaired to an island at some distance above the mines. Here the channel of navigation for loaded boats was narrowed—as it is to this day—to a deep and tranquil current some three hundred feet in width. Beyond was a succession of small isles, shallows and sand bars.

Behind a sharp ridge of sand, at the upper extremity of the large island, Du Bois planted his hooped cannon. On the opposite bank, but lower down, under a big oak, he mounted the charred piece, with its mouth gaping upon the river. Along with this dummy cannon was also mounted a big-bore fowling-piece, placed breech against the tree, with a string

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attached to the trigger and loaded to the muzzle with balls and slugs.

The log gun at the sand bank was effectively ambushed by dry bushes and drift stuff flung carelessly along the ridge. A number of loaded rifles also were placed under cover behind this natural earthwork.

The hostile boats, so soon expected, however, were delayed. Du Bois and his little party waited, living upon jerked meat, for three or four days. Every morning there was fog upon the river, and Du Bois began to fear the bateaux had slipped by him unawares. Then, on the fourth morning, after the mist had lifted, Bobadeesha came running in from the hill of look-out. The "Inglis" and the Winnebagoes were coming—ten boats; he held up the fingers of both hands.

Then this daring man, Jean Marie Du Bois, posted his forces. The Young Corn was left in hiding to fire the fowling piece, freshly primed. She was to pull its trigger as soon as the boats should reach a certain point upon the river, marked from her line of vision, toward the island. If the enemy then attempted landing she was to flee to the woods. With final repetition of instructions Du Bois took an affectionate leave of his young wife and, with Bobadeesha, repaired to the sand ridge. They hid their bateau among some willows and then primed their rifles and arranged them for quick firing. Then Du Bois lighted, smokeless, a little heap of charcoal, and they were ready.

Presently the fleet of boats, with sails furled—for there was no breeze—swept around a bend and bore

down upon them. As they came on Du Bois corrected the Indian count. There were eleven large bateaux, each manned with a crew of eighteen or twenty men. Their delay could be easily accounted for in the time it must have taken to cross the portage at La Prairie.

Five or six boats were in the lead and nearly abreast. Du Bois could see no cannon, but cannon was what he feared, if indeed so bold a man fears anything. One boat was loaded wholly with British officers and red-coats and Du Bois saw with much regret that the bateau would pass furthest from his position. He wanted to sink that boat at the outset. To deal with the Winnebagoes, unofficered by their white allies, he felt would simplify matters. But war is war and one must fight a stationary battery, especially of logs, as one has opportunity. So reasoned this admirable Frenchman. It was his patriotic duty to defend innocent and happy villages from a ruthless invader. Not again should these inhuman savages ravage and lay waste the country of the allies if he and his could prevent. Not for an instant did this intrepid man quail.

One boat was now drawing in near the bar. It was manned by a crowd of befeathered and paint-streaked chiefs and high warriors and a couple of red-coats, who doubtless managed its sail when there was a wind. Du Bois noted, with exultation, that this bateau was likely to pass within fifty feet of shore.

He now glanced across to where he had left the Young Corn in hiding. Nothing was to be seen save

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the great oak and a bush which had been thrown upon the muzzle of the sham cannon. Had the young wife fled in terror? In the face of approaching odds he could not have blamed her. Yet one shot from the fearfully loaded gun across there might prove vital to his plan.

He turned to note the attitude of Bobadeesha, who had charge of the rifles. The Indian lad lay upon his breast against the sand bank, his face sheltered by a wisp of willow twigs, narrowly watching the boats. There was an eager light in his eyes, a fierce, valorous glow upon his dark cheek which spoke of unbounded courage and determination. For the first time this boy was about to lift his hand against the hereditary enemies of his home and country.

The heart of Jean Du Bois warmed and his blood rioted tingling to his finger-tips. Neither the boy nor the Young Corn would fly. They would stay in the fight to its finish. Reassured, he turned to inspection of the fleet.

The foremost boats were now nearly opposite. Soon prying eyes might detect the uncovered muzzle of his clumsy gun. The near bateau was right at hand. He gathered a live coal upon a bit of bark and ran his eye along the barrel. Its aim was too high, but the piece was balanced upon the sharp ridge. He elevated the breech with one hand and, as the prow of the bateau passed his line of sight, dropped a bit of fire upon the priming.

Boom! A dull, hollow roar and a crash of pine splinters was followed by whoops of fright and amaze-

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ment and then by a great splashing of scared swimmers. Du Bois instantly fired a musket on either hand, aimed simply to rake the river with small bullets, and before the smoke had lifted, rammed a home-made cartridge into his home-made cannon.

"Surrender!" he shouted above the din. "Surrender, or we finish the bateaux!"

As the smoke of his guns lifted, his eyes fell upon a scene of confusion. The bateau which had received his wad of slugs had overturned and was floating bottom up, while the survivors of its crew were threshing water frantically in their efforts to get aboard other boats. All the bateaux had swung to, fearing more effective ambush in the narrows below. The Winnebagoes were paddling for dear life to reverse their heavily loaded craft. The British crew, lower in the channel, however, had dexterously brought their boat about. A young officer standing in its bow was eagerly scanning the sand ridge. He saw the black muzzle of a single cannon confronting him.

"Forward men!" he shouted, courageously, "land and give 'em the guns!" The man was bold as a lion. Du Bois, behind his cannon, felt a thrill of admiration. It was thus a soldier should meet the enemy. The young officer roared at the Winnebagoes and flourished his arms until the flush of his valor enthused them. Despite the fact that Bobadeesha was firing rifles from behind his line of drift stuff Du Bois saw that the whole force of the enemy were encouraged to attack.

Some of the boats were drifting now and the brave

THE BULLET-MAKER'S STRATEGY

Frenchman saw that these would quickly make a landing below. With intense anxiety he turned his eyes upon the Young Corn's ambuscade. Dare she fire upon those boats? They were under the very muzzle of her gun. Now was the time! At that instant he saw a slim figure stoop from behind the big oak and fling away the bush which covered a threatening muzzle. The figure disappeared and before he could catch breath there was an explosion like the bursting of a shell.

Slugs, bullets, pieces of gun-barrel whistled and sang. These flew wildly over and among the bateaux. Two or three of the Winnebagoes were knocked off their knees and their paddles drifted upon the current.

"*Surrendre!*" The voice was high and confident.
"*Surrendre! ou nous finirons les bateaux!*"

The English officer, still standing in his boat, looked about him with anxiety. His Winnebagoes were paddling frantically to get up stream and out of ambush. He looked squarely into the muzzle of a gun which had sunk one of his bateaux. He ordered his men to hold their boat steady.

"Upon what conditions, Monsieur, if we choose to yield?" he called to Du Bois, in the tongue of France.

"The French and the Sacs and Foxes of the Mississippi," responded Jean, "desire nothing but to be left at peace. If *Monsieur l'Officier* will have the politeness to land his bateau and lay down the English muskets, Monsieur shall retain his sword and retreat with all his forces whence he came." Generous terms! The Englishman lifted his hat in salute.

"I have the honor," he said, "to accept the conditions of Monsieur le—"

"Captain Du Bois, *par la grâce de Dieu* general of the forces on both sides of this river," supplied the bullet-maker.

And now, to overcome the peril of this surrender, for all boats had halted at this brief parley, Jean Du Bois added: "Monsieur will keep his Indians at a distance. Monsieur will land only five men to stack the arms of his enlisted soldiers.

"Very well," replied the British officer, and forthwith ordered his allies to proceed upon the retreat. The terrified Winnebagoes were only too glad to obey.

At some fifty yards below his position the muskets were delivered and then Jean, standing upon his embankment, gravely exchanged salutes with the vanquished, as the soldiers paddled away in the wake of their frightened allies.

At Mackinaw, some weeks later, the British lieutenant reported a sharp skirmish with superior forces guarding the Mississippi waterway.

When the enemy's departure was safely assured, the intrepid defender of the river and his jubilant young helpers returned to their vocation upon the bluff.

A N A D V E N T U R E
W I T H A C O U G A R

AN ADVENTURE WITH A COUGAR

Wherever hunters and dogs abound, the cougar, if found at all, is a timid, shrinking, voiceless brute, fighting only when brought to bay. It learns and practices infinite caution. Hence the beast has fallen into a certain contempt; latter-day naturalists even deny that it gives voice to the long, quavering cry that was formerly attributed to it. But I have often heard that cry and I know, too, that the tamed, man-hunted cougar differs from its congeners of the mountain wilds somewhat as the Moravian Indian differed from the savage Shawnee of old.

The adventure I am about to relate occurred near French Creek, in the Black Hills of Dakota, in August, 1875—a region then untrodden by white men, except our little band of miners, which had recently gathered along this creek, and the exploring expeditions of General Custer and Professor Jenney. Rich in gold and silver though they are, the Black Hills had been guarded at every avenue of approach by thousands of hostile Sioux. They themselves were deterred by traditions and superstitions from much venturing within the shadows of their black pines; so that we found there no trace of aboriginal habitation, permanent or transient.

There was a solemn and wonderful atmosphere in that primitive wilderness. Its denizens, unscared by man, seldom fled at first approach. The pine-hen sat

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upon limb of bush or tree and cocked its head without fear. The big, dun mule-deer approached the lone prospector with open-eyed, curious gaze, and, if not stopped by a bullet, would often come within a few steps of him. The grizzly bear actually came into camp to be killed, for he had never before found his path barred by living creatures—and there the cougar, never hunted, knew not fear of man.

I left our camp on a warm Sunday afternoon for a stroll among the hills, and, from force of Sunday habit, I left my gun in my tent. As I disliked to feel a revolver banging against my hips, I went for my walk unarmed.

In the course of half an hour, alternately walking and scrambling, I came to the head of the gulch and out upon a rough slope surmounted by cap-rocks, which formed the highest hilltop within reach. Along the base of these scarred and fissured rocks grew creeping pine, brier and raspberry bushes, bearing ripe fruit. Many berries had fallen and more had been gathered by the bears and birds, but enough yet remained, red and luscious, to furnish me with a palatable after-dinner relish.

When I had eaten all I wished, I resolved to climb to a summit of the rocks, that I might get a more extended view of the beautiful region. But to reach those lookout heights was no easy task. I sought for some time a way up, and at length found a great cleft or split in the rocks which offered an arduous line of ascent along one steep and rugged face.

Along the fissured surface of this cleft I advanced



"I found myself looking directly into the eyes of a large red cougar."

AN ADVENTURE WITH A COUGAR

slowly and cautiously, going up slantwise, now on my hands and knees and again drawing myself up bodily by clutching rocky projections with my fingers. As I passed along the face of the cleft it deepened and widened and the ascent became still more difficult and perilous. Below me lay two steep inclines, each with a *chevaux-de-frise* of rock points and scattered pines, reaching to a dizzy depth.

Finally, when I almost despaired of climbing farther and when descent seemed equally dangerous, I reached a flat surface of the rock where there was a thin soil and clustering juniper bush, then I discovered an easier way of climbing to the summit, still fifty feet or so above my head.

After scanning the ascent I lay, puffing with exertion, tired and heated, flat upon my face to rest. A cool breeze blowing through the cleft fanned my cheeks and I enjoyed in anticipation the grand expanse of horizon which awaited me on the heights. I had lain thus several minutes, when I became aware, with a quick and creepy thrill, of some magnetic presence close at hand. What sort of creature was it which could thus make itself felt?

I raised my head, turned my face instinctively toward the wall of rock upon my right, and found myself looking directly into the yellow-green, scintillating eyes of a large red cougar.

The great cat had crept stealthily out from a shelter of bush and rock and lay upon its stomach facing me and not a dozen feet distant. Its ears were pricked forward and it was watching me with intense and

savage curiosity. The big eyes, with dilating pupils, were fixed on me in a fascinated stare.

There was no movement of the cougar's body or head, save a slight quivering about the muzzle. Its great paws were outstretched, their claws hidden in the soft fur which covered them; the tail curved upward in a curious twist, not unlike the hook of an interrogation point.

The whole attitude of the animal was one of half-fierce, half-wondering questioning. It was as if it saw in me a big and probably harmless reptile—perhaps a huge kind of lizard or turtle.

I cannot recall that cowardice was ever attributed to me, even in childhood; but as I looked into the eyes of that treacherous beast I was afraid—terribly afraid. I dared not get to my feet and thus invite immediate attack, for had I possessed the speed of a greyhound there was no way to run. I had no weapon save a small and worse than useless pocket-knife. Plainly my only recourse was to lie in perfect quiet until the animal should gratify its curiosity and haply, if not hungry, take itself off.

I had not long to wait until there was a sudden unsheathing of the yellow claws and the cougar leaped lightly to its feet. It came toward me fearlessly, with a slow, cat's tread, holding its head sidewise and lashing its tail.

Sick with a sense of helplessness, I could only lie inert, waiting to grapple barehanded with the beast as a final resort. My only movement was to lower my face to the soil and clasp the back of my

AN ADVENTURE WITH A COUGAR

neck with both hands to prevent a fatal bite at the outset.

The cougar snarled down at me in a warning fashion. Then it gave me a heavy pat upon the shoulder—a tentative, stingless, half playful stroke, intended doubtless to test my defensive qualities. Finding me apparently of a despicable spirit, the brute coolly took possession of my body.

It sniffed fastidiously at my woolen shirt, then roughly rolled me over and lay upon me, the points of its shoulders resting squarely on my chest. I managed, while the animal's claws were pricking my side and leg, to shift my hands in readiness to defend my throat.

There I lay upon my back, with that great beast across me, its heart thumping against my ribs, its red lips parted, its claws ripping at the hard soil as if to sharpen them for a banquet!

In my despair I regretted keenly that I had not flung myself over the declivity and taken my chances in a terrific slide down its steep, ragged slope. I resolved to make the desperate leap if an opportunity should offer in the struggle which must come.

There could be no doubt of the final intention of the beast. The cougar was merely indulging itself in a bit of cat-play and, when this should end, would treat me as a cat does a mouse.

The animal thrust its head down sidewise and snarled; its big eyes narrowed to cruel points, and its hot breath played upon my face. Its tail switched back and forth, lashing first my boots and then my

head, from which the hat had fallen. In every motion of the creature there was a hard, perfect efficiency and, under the working of its whip-cord muscles, I felt myself quite powerless.

Nevertheless, an impulse was strong upon me to clutch the beast by the throat and try to hurl it over the ledge. But reason saved me from such a rash attempt. The cougar was a large one, of a variety since famed as the mountain-lion. Certainly it would instantly tear me asunder if I grappled with it.

The brute snarled and scratched with increasing vehemence. Its hind claws, working against my left side, tore my clothes and sliced me painfully. Through this ordeal I lay in perfect quiet, suppressing breath and appearance of animation.

Suddenly the cougar sprang to its feet and leaped lithely away. I turned my face, in a great hope that it would abandon me, but only to see it sink behind a spray of pencil-cedar a few yards distant. There it lay, with nothing visible save the light play of its tail. Despite its great size, the animal was still young enough to be eager for play with a too easily caught victim.

Was it possible the creature might finally go away and leave me? No; amid the clustering cedar sprigs I caught the gleam of its yellow-green eye—an eye fastened upon me in cunning, waiting cruelty. Evidently I was expected to move, and furnish sport in the killing. Without doubt, too, the cougar shrewdly suspected me of playing the part of the turtle or the porcupine.

AN ADVENTURE WITH A COUGAR

I now thought of trying to escape. How far and how fast might I go? I rolled cautiously over until I could look down the steeps of the ledge. To throw myself over at that point would be destruction. The descent was not perpendicular, but quite appalling in its ragged steeps. There were scattered pines growing in soil-filled crevices, but the nearest of them was too far below to offer hope of lodgment.

I ran my eye along the slope in advance and saw that, by crawling some twenty-five or thirty feet on the brink I could, if nimble enough, leap down upon a jutting point of rock and thence into the thick top of a pine beneath. What lay immediately beyond was hidden by a projection. It was a desperate chance, even if I might crawl so far in safety—simply a chance of outdoing the cougar in daring a perilous descent.

I crawled slowly forward along the rim of the declivity, keeping a close eye upon the cougar's swaying tail. I guided my movements by that danger-signal. When the tail switched too nervously, I sank upon the rocks and lay inert.

Hitching myself forward, inch by inch, I actually succeeded in delaying an attack until I had reached the only safe footing for a leap. Well out of reach of a single bound of the animal, I sprang to my feet with a yell of defiance and jumped outward with all my might.

I alighted with a heavy jar upon the projecting rock and instantly leaped for the pine-top below. There was a dizzy swoop of twenty feet and I crashed

among the branches and clutched wildly at them as they broke beneath me. By sheer luck, as it seemed, I lodged head downward in a tangle of lower limbs which had been turned aside in their growth by the face of the rock.

Before there was time to move I heard a rushing swish of boughs overhead, the snapping of a big limb and a muffled thud upon the slope below. Then, clinging face downward, with but few limbs to intervene, I saw my enemy, the cougar, go down the fearful steep in a lightning slide, clawing and spitting at the rocks, until it disappeared among some pine-tops below.

Two minutes later, safely seated, I again saw my enemy, with drooping tail, limping, along the bottom of the gulch. The cougar had survived that frightful descent, but the courage had been taken out of it, and I had no further fear.

Although much scratched and bruised, I had no broken bones. It was only by the hardest kind of scrambling that I got safely to the top of the ledge. Then, thankful enough for life and freedom, I made my way back to camp.

“G O !” A N E P I S O D E
O F I N V A S I O N

“GO!” AN EPISODE OF INVASION

The new El Dorado was in sight. Gordon's party of twelve tired frontiersmen had mounted the high divide which separates the sources of the Running Water from those of the Cheyenne. For five weeks the men had shoveled drifts, buffeted blizzards and kept a constant vigil among the interminable sand-hills. By means, too, of stable-canvas, shovels, axes, iron picket-pins and a modicum of dry feed, they had kept in good condition the splendid eight-mule team which drew their big freighter.

In fact, "Gordon's outfit" was a model one in every respect. Probably no similar body of men ever faced our snow-bound, trackless plains, better equipped for the adventure. And now the muffled marchers cheered as "Cap" Gordon halted them and pointed to a blurred and inky upheaval upon the far rim of a limitless waste of white. The famous Black Hills, a veritable wonderland, unseen hitherto by any party of whites save the men of Custer's expedition, lay before them.

Two more days and the gold-seekers would gain the shelter of those pine-covered hills, where their merry axes would "eat chips" until shelter, comfort and safety from attack were secured. Out of the bitter cold, after weeks of toil and danger, into warmth and safety—no wonder they were glad!

As yet they had seen no sign of the hostile Sioux,

but their frosty cheers, thin and piping, had hardly been borne away by the cutting wind when a moving black speck appeared on the western horizon.

The speck drew nearer and resolved itself into a solitary horseman. Could it be that a single Sioux would approach a party of their strength? They watched the rider without anxiety. They were so near the goal now that no war-party of sufficient strength to become a menace was likely to be gathered. They were equipped with an arsenal of modern guns and fifty thousand rounds of ammunition, and had boasted that they were "good to stand off three hundred Sioux."

Nearer and nearer drew the horseman, his pony coming on in rabbit-like jumps to clear the drifts. Speculation ceased. It was an Indian—probably a hunter strayed far from his village, half-starved and coming to beg for food. Well, the poor wretch should have frozen bread and meat, as much as he could eat—they could not stop to give him better fare.

It was as cold as Greenland. The bundled driver upon the great wagon slapped his single line and yelled at the plodding mules. Eleven buffalo-coated, fur-encased men, with feet clad in snow-packs, marched at the tail of the freighter. In such weather their cold "shooting-irons" were left in the wagon, nor did they deem it necessary now to get them out.

They were prepared for a begging Indian, but the apparition which finally rode in upon the monotony of their long march seemed to them a figure as farcical as savage. As the Sioux horseman confronted them

“GO!” AN EPISODE OF INVASION

he lowered his blanket, uncovering his solemn barbarian face and, stretching out one long arm, pointed them back upon their trail.

“Go!” he said; and he repeated the command with fierce insistence.

The big freight-wagon rattled on, but the footmen halted for a moment to laugh.

The Indian stretched his lean arm and shouted, “Go!” still more savagely. It was immensely funny. Gordon’s men jeered the solitary autocrat and laughed until their icicled beards pulled. They bade him get into a drift and cool off; asked him if his mother knew he were out; whether his feet were sore; if it hurt him much to talk, and if he hadn’t a brother who could chin-chin *washtado*.

His sole answer to their jeering, as he rode alongside, was “Go! Go! Go!” repeated with savage emphasis and a flourish of his arm to southward.

The footmen were plodding a dozen rods in the rear of their freight-wagon, and still laughing frostily at this queer specimen of “Injun,” when the savage spurred his pony forward. A few quick leaps carried him up to the toiling eight-mule team. His blanket dropped around his hips and a repeating carbine rose to his face. Both wheelers dropped at the first shot, killed by a single ounce slug. A rapid fusillade of shots was distributed among the struggling mules and then the Sioux was off, shaking his gun and yelling defiance, his pony going in zigzag leaps and like the wind.

Men ran tumbling over each other to get into the

wagon and at their guns. The teamster and two or three others who, despite the cold, carried revolvers under their greatcoats, jerked their mittens and fumbled with stiff fingers for their weapons. They had not been nerved up with excitement, like the Sioux, and before they could bring their guns to bear the savage was well out upon the prairie.

And when these men tried, with rifle or revolver, to shoot at the swiftly moving, erratic mark presented by the cunning Sioux and his rabbit-like pony, the cutting wind numbed their fingers and filled their eyes with water, the glistening snow obscured their front sights and they pelted a white waste harmlessly with bullets.

The anger which raged in them when they knew the Sioux had escaped scot-free, was something frightful. Six mules of the splendid eight lay weltering in blood; another was disabled and only one had come off without hurt. Half the counties of northwestern Iowa had been scoured to get together "Gordon's Pride," as this fine freight-team had been named before the party left Sioux City.

The blight of their hopeful expedition, the frightful peril of their situation, were lost sight of in the absorbing desire for revenge which burned in every man of them as they gazed upon the stricken, stiffening heap of animals. All were for giving chase immediately. They believed they could easily overtake the Sioux among the drifts of the lower lands, where creeks and snow-filled ravines must cause him to shift his course continually.

"GO!" AN EPISODE OF INVASION

"Boys," said Gordon, when some of them had hastily begun to strip for the chase, "boys, this is my particular affair. You make camp and fix it for fightin'. I'll either get that Sioux or he'll fetch his tribe back an' get us."

Cy Gordon was their captain. He had been a hay and wood-contractor for many years in the Sioux country and his word was law to this little band.

There was no need to argue that no man could have even guessed at the daring and disaster they had looked upon. The performance had been too appallingly simple and easy. It had come as unexpectedly as the flood of a cloudburst or the bursting of a gun.

While his men stood vengefully watching the flying Sioux, Gordon stripped himself of superfluous wrappings, stocked his pockets with frozen bread and cartridges, slipped on a pair of snow-shoes kept for emergency, tightened his belt and launched himself in pursuit.

Horse and rider were again no more than a speck upon the vast snow-field. Gordon, with an "express" rifle under his arm, took the long, swinging stride of the accomplished snow-shoer. In an hour the speck upon the snow had not grown smaller.

At high noon, by the sun, upon a broad flat where tall grass held the snow, Gordon came almost within bullet-range of the Sioux. An hour later, among a tangle of drifted ravines, there was an exchange of shots, and the Sioux's pony dropped in its tracks. The Indian dodged out of sight, and Gordon pushed warily on with a grin of hate under his icicles.

He took up the Sioux tracks and noted with satisfaction that the Indian's moccasined feet punched through the light crust at every other step. In just a little while!

But he followed for an hour or more among a seemingly interminable tangle of gullies without catching a glimpse of the wary dodger. Then he emerged into a wider valley, to find that the artful rascal had escaped out of range and out of sight upon a wind-swept stretch of river ice.

Gordon ground his teeth and swept over the smooth surface, sweating, despite the sharp cold, from fierce exertion. At a turn of the river he saw the Sioux; but there were others—more than a score of them, mounted and approaching the runner. The mule-killer's camp or town was close at hand.

Exhausted from his long run, Gordon, in his own language, "threw up the sponge." He hastily sought the cover of river-drifts and scooped himself a kind of rifle-pit. Then, with a pile of cartridges between his knees and slapping his hands to keep his fingers ready for action, he waited, meaning to do what execution he could before the end.

There was considerable parley among the Sioux, and then only a single Indian advanced toward the white man. This one came on afoot within gunshot, then stopped and shook his blanket in token that he wanted to approach and talk.

Gordon laughed. The situation seemed to him grimly humorous. He motioned to the Indian to come on, but kept him well covered with his rifle. A moment later, however, he lowered his gun.

"GO!" AN EPISODE OF INVASION

Whatever fate awaited Gordon, he knew that he stood in no danger of a treacherous stroke from the approaching Sioux. It was the chief, Red Cloud. Gordon arose, and the chief came forward with a hand outstretched.

"My young man has killed your mules," was Red Cloud's greeting in the Sioux tongue.

Gordon understood. "Yes," he said, "and I will not take your hand until you have done right."

The grave old chief drew his blanket about his shoulders with a shrug. "Now listen," he said. "If one of your soldiers had approached a party of my soldiers and had killed all their horses, and so crippled them and escaped, your people would have made him a big captain. It is so. My young man is very brave. He did as he was told. You cannot come here and take my country—not yet. I have watched your advance and complained to your soldiers at White River. When I saw they did not go out and catch you as our Great Father has said they should do, I sent my young man to stop you. You will find your soldiers at the three forks of White River. Now go!"

And without another word, Red Cloud turned upon his heel and stalked away.

This time Gordon was glad enough to obey the injunction to "go." Three days later his little party filed in at the military camp on White River. Some time afterward, when their boxes of freight had been recovered, not so much as a blanket or a pound of sugar had been taken by Red Cloud's Sioux.

THOSE GORDON GIRLS

THOSE GORDON GIRLS

The scattered homesteaders of Hat Creek Valley all knew Betty and Callie Gordon by sight, for they were annual summer visitors at Ten Bar Ranch on Coyote Creek; and three times a week the girls rode up the valley and across the prairie to Oelrich's for their mail.

But for two or three years the farmers and their families never spoke of the ranchman's daughters except as "those Gordon girls," or "them girls from Omaha." Plainly they disapproved of Betty and Callie, of their felt hats and "new-fangled" dress and of their riding astride. Secretly, however, the fine horsemanship and blooming faces of the Gordon sisters were admired, for the women and children dwelling in the log shacks and weather-beaten pine cabins would watch the girls furtively whenever they rode by.

These people of Hat Creek and other valleys of a semi-arid region had for years been seeing the stockmen about them growing rich. They themselves found it hard to bring sufficient water to nourish their little plots of land. A good many of them felt an envious jealousy of their richer neighbors.

Betty and Callie Gordon would often have liked to stop and talk with women and children whom they met, but these invariably hurried on with curt nods and cold looks, or simply passed by with averted faces. None of the outlying neighbors ever called at Ten Bar

Ranch, although any of them would have been made heartily welcome.

Near the close of their third summer at the ranch Betty and Callie resolved to make an end of this condition of things. They put on plain calico dresses and called upon their "five-mile neighbors," the Lasseters, where there was a school-teacher and a large family of engaging young girls. But their reception was cool and diffident. The very calico dresses which they hoped would commend them were looked upon as marks of condescension.

Callie, the youngest, who was fifteen and fond of company, cried with vexation as she and Betty rode homeward.

"It's just too silly for anything," she declared, "the way those people act toward us! If they'd only say something mean 'twould be a relief! There's Georgie and—and—what's her name?—just our ages, and they could come over and have the jolliest times!"

"They think we think we're above them," answered Betty, "and that we're aching to patronize them, when we're just aching to be good friends! They'd have liked us better with our summer flannels on," and Betty sighed in a disappointment quite as genuine as her sister's.

They did not try to call on their Hat Creek neighbors again; but occasionally, on their rides to and from Oelrich's, they stopped to get a drink at Lasseter's well, which was walled up and held the coolest and best water in the valley. There was a rusty tin cup chained to its curb and all passers-by were welcome

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to help themselves; but the Lasseter girls never came out to offer any greetings, as Betty and Callie would have liked them to do.

Sometimes the Gordon girls overtook Miss Lasseter and the younger children on their way home from the prairie school-house, which was two miles distant. On these occasions they got only brief nods of recognition from the teacher and shy glances of embarrassment from the little ones. Betty and Callie would have been delighted to load their ponies with those four little girls, but they knew that an invitation to ride would be refused.

In the following June, when they came from Omaha, Miss Lasseter was still teaching the home school. Two weeks later the Gordon girls saw her on her way down the valley.

With three little sisters she had reached the bottom lands and was trudging along the dusty Hat Creek road when Betty and Callie came upon the bluffs above.

"They've got on new pink dresses, all of them," remarked Betty. "Maybe Mr. Lasseter is getting rich, and then they'll be willing to speak to us."

"Oh, the schoolma'am bought those new dresses, I guess," said Callie. "How I wish Georgie and all the girls could have been with us at Lost Spring Cañon to-day!"

The two had carried their luncheon and picket-ropes and, for the twentieth time, perhaps, had spent a half-day in exploring the nooks and crannies of a picturesque, pine-grown cañon.

They had leisurely descended the Hat Creek bluffs and were well out upon the valley road, when Betty's attention was called to the peculiar antics of a range-horse at the foot of a hill a little in front of them. The animal was going round in a circle at a swift gallop and appeared to be striking and biting at some imaginary foe.

"Why, look at that pony!" exclaimed Betty. "What can be the matter with it?"

"O Betty," cried Callie, after a brief look, "it's a locoed horse! Don't you know Joe has told us about the epidemic of eating loco-weed? He said four of our range-horses had gone stark crazy this season. We must ride back upon the prairie and get out of the way!"

"No," said Betty. "The foreman said, when you see a locoed horse, to stand or sit perfectly still and it will never notice you. The cowmen have learned that and that's the reason there are so few accidents when the horses eat the weed."

So the young girls sat on their ponies, hardly daring to speak aloud as the careering pony circled about in its mad gallop and drew nearer and nearer to the road. Now and then the fighting creature stopped, threw up its head and stared; then, with bared teeth, it plunged sidewise, snapping and striking viciously into space.

In three or four minutes the animal came to the road and stood, seemingly impressed with the sense that here was a big trail, but undetermined which way to turn. Then it wheeled, and in a cloud of

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dust dashed straight down the valley toward those four pink dresses, now mere blotches of color, nearly a mile away.

Not for an instant did the Gordon girls hesitate. With a single impulse they plied their short whips, and, with sharp cries to their ponies, were racing neck and neck upon the dusty trail of the crazy range-horse.

Each was riding a swift and sure-footed cattle-pony, perfectly trained to the chase; and each, of necessity, was mounted upon the stout, double-cinch stock-saddle, which is the only one in use in the cattle country.

Each, also, had practiced rope-throwing as a pastime, but neither had ever roped a wild creature from the saddle. Nevertheless, as their ponies took the road and flattened their heads and stretched their necks in the strenuous action of a hard chase, each of these brave girls ran her picket-rope off her saddle-pommel—to which one end was fast—and coiled it for a cast.

Futile as their efforts might prove, the ropes were their only weapons against the fury of the beast they were chasing. Speed, too, was necessary if they would save the defenseless teacher and those three shy-eyed little girls. So they again plied their quirts mercilessly, bending forward upon their ponies' necks and pushing the animals to a pace which made the wind whistle shrilly in their ears.

Nearer and nearer they drew, for the locoed pony, although running hard, wasted its energy in vicious side-strokes and now and then in wild shakings of the head.

Soon the flying riders were almost upon the wild horse's heels; but now the pink dresses, too, were close at hand. Miss Lasseter and her little sisters had heard the clatter of hoofs and were standing well out from the road, curiously watching the chase.

"What *can* she be saying about 'those Gordon girls' now?" wondered Betty, who was in the lead of her sister and almost alongside the mad pony. She raised her voice in a shrill, clear cry: "Down! Down! Lie down! Locoed pony! Lie down!"

The teacher heard and understood. She dropped upon the grass, almost fainting from fright, and motioned the little ones to lie down beside her. One of them obeyed, but the other two instantly took to flight and sped across the prairie, as swift of foot as young rabbits.

Almost instantly, too, the flutter of their pink dresses caught the eye of the locoed horse, and, with teeth snapping like the click of wire shears, the creature dashed straight at them.

This turn gave the watchful and waiting Betty her opportunity. Her trained cow-horse took the quarter course perfectly, its nose upon the quarry's flank, and Betty, leaning well forward, swung her wide noose with care and dropped it fairly over the head of the crazy charger.

With set teeth she braced herself for the shock and reined her pony in. The locoed one was thrown a somersault as expeditiously as though a cowboy had managed it. But the fight had just begun.

Callie cast her noose at the struggling creature's



"The dangerous beast in a fierce dash after her."

legs, as she had seen cowboys do with steers and horses; but her throw missed, and, before she could turn her pony to try again the mad animal had got upon its feet.

The frightened school-teacher, with a child clinging to her dress, with clasped hands and bated breath, wanting to help, yet too helpless even to run away, now watched a fight that was exciting and perilous.

The crazed horse, in spite of the cow-pony's tugs, leaped to its feet as if its muscles were springs of steel and charged headlong at its captor, but the cow-pony dodged with the dexterity of its kind. Back and forth and round and round the horses darted, with brave Betty Gordon sticking to her saddle, catching in slack rope at critical moments and doing it all with the coolness and courage of an old line-rider.

Her pony, indeed, dodged the slapping hoofs and snapping jaws of its adversary with a cleverness that left its rider free to attend to the rope and to her seat. But how many girls could have kept that seat at all?

Callie circled rapidly round the fighting animals, riding in and throwing her noose again and again, only to be foiled by the erratic movements of the locoed pony.

Both girls had forgotten fear. Their hats were off, their hair flying, their faces flushed and their eyes shining with the light of battle.

The fight circled out upon the prairie and back to the road again.

Three times Callie drew off the dangerous beast in a fierce dash after her own mount, and three times

the locoed one was thrown heels over head. Each time, as her pony wheeled, Callie threw her noose upon the struggling animal's legs and the third time succeeded in looping both its hind feet.

The fight was now quickly finished and a crazy pony was stretched helpless between taut ropes.

O Miss Lasseter," called the panting Betty, "please run for your papa's rifle! Too bad, but—it's the only way for us!"

And Miss Lasseter ran. Five minutes later, however, Lasseter himself, who had seen the fight from a distance, came riding up and proceeded to tie the locoed pony fast.

"It's my horse," he explained; "just took to-day. Three days of starvin' and plenty of carbonate of soda will fix him all right. There, now, I'm mightily obliged to you girls, an' we'll take it awful kind if you'll come in to supper—it's waitin'."

And there was never any coolness between the Gordons and the Lasseters after that.

MY HOST THE ENEMY

M Y H O S T T H E E N E M Y

In 1855 my nearest neighbors at Long Slough were Musquakie Joe and old Chief Nehauger, who lived in earth lodges at the upper end of the shallow lake. To west of us an unbroken Sioux country extended indefinitely; but the Sioux seldom came upon Iowa ground.

In my second autumn in this country it became necessary for me to go to the new town of Sioux City on business, but I could not leave my fall work and make the trip until about November 1st, and then deep snows prevented me from traveling by team. But go I must, and so one morning I packed a single large buffalo-robe and some provisions upon my back, bade my family good-by and went to the Musquakie lodges, where I succeeded in hiring Joe as my guide. We had to traverse fully one hundred miles of snow-bound prairie which to me was unknown.

The snow was soft and "mealy," the drifts were deep and our snow-shoes sank and plowed so much that progress was slow; but the weather was propitious and all went well until the third afternoon. Then Joe, who was rather lively and talkative for an Indian, became glum and solemn as an owl. He answered my questions in gruff monosyllables or not at all, and I feared he was inclined to turn back and desert me.

At sundown we reached a good camping-place in a

willow patch near the head of a small stream. While we were gathering dry wood and scraping snow for a night bivouac, Joe now and then looked anxiously at the sky. It was a warm and beautiful winter evening, so I asked my guide, in some surprise, whether he thought it was going to storm.

"Hungh!" he grunted, in amazement; then seeing serious inquiry in my face, he pointed to the sky. "To-morrow," he said, "sun so high"—indicating about eleven o'clock—"snow, wind, she come b-b-b-buh!" He hunched his back and shivered as if the storm were already upon us.

But the next morning dawned bright and pleasant and I smiled with pleasure as I crawled out of my buffalo-robe and took a look at the fleckless sky. Joe was already singeing a piece of side pork for our breakfast. After we had eaten he led the way to a near rise of ground which overlooked a vast level stretch to west and north.

With a single glance over this snow waste, Joe gave a grunt of satisfaction.

"Hungh!" he said. "Heap Injun on river, mebbe Musquakie, mebbe Johnny Green tribe. We go!"

Away upon the rim of the northwest horizon a dim smudge of smoke rose. People of some sort, ten or fifteen miles away, were building their morning fires. Sioux City was not in that direction, but remonstrance was in vain with Musquakie Joe. Go he would and a stranger upon that monotonous waste had nothing to do but follow. He went at a run, too, or as near it as I could accomplish.

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This pace soon tired me; but at about ten o'clock I saw the reason for haste. The northwest sky had turned a silvery slate color; there was a big bright ring around the sun, with sun-dogs of extraordinary brilliancy at four diameters and from these straight bars of light were projected half-way to zenith and horizon line.

From time to time Joe cast his eyes up at these phenomena and muttered hoarsely as he ran. Those rings, bars and mock suns were to him the visible threats and signs portent of the awful god of winter storms.

We could no longer see the smoke of the Indian village, trappers' camp, or whatever it was; but away upon our right a break in the snow-line showed a river bend thinly fringed with trees and willow clumps. Presently upon our left loped two big buffalo wolves, running for cover in a haste as great as our own, and these ominous figures passed at fifty yards without so much as turning their heads.

A woolen blankness suddenly obscured the west and the few landmarks in our front were blotted out as if by magic. The loping wolves were swallowed up in it. A gust of cold wind slapped in our faces and curls of powdered snow writhed at our feet. Then came the sharp spit of ice-flakes and a fresh howl of the wind. A roaring blizzard was upon us.

From the outset I could see nothing five paces distant. I had no idea of direction. I followed at the heels of Joe, staggering against a searching, icy wind which chilled me to the bone. I dared not attempt

to undo my robe and wrap it about my body. I could not have held to it for an instant. We could not lift our snow-shoes from the surface and we plowed forward at a snail's pace.

Presently we shuffled down-hill and I knew the Indian's wonderful instinct was holding us to a straight course. Benumbed and ready to drop from fatigue, I followed at his heels. Then we began to run against tree-trunks where trees offered no protection from the fury of the storm. Soon we were standing up against an Indian tepee and Joe was shouting and thumping at its frozen flaps. These were undone from the inside and a black head was thrust out into the storm.

Instantly Joe turned upon me, shouting: "Sioux! Sioux! *Petit Corbeau's* camp!" He attempted to drag me away, but I resisted stoutly and he vanished in thick snow-dust. A hostile camp-fire, with a final risk of burning at the stake, held no such terrors for me as that awful storm.

When I turned to the tepee a gun was protruding where the head had been. I dodged behind this lodge and saw, in a whirl of snow-dust, the top stakes of another looming up in front of me. Toward this one I lunged, determined to enter before alarming its inmates. Once inside the tepee of even the bitterest of hostiles I would not be refused hospitality.

Whiffs of smoke were blown down into my face while I felt for the tepee's opening; its door was to leeward. The outside flap was tied down to within two feet or so of the bottom and a big stone had been laid upon

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an extra fold of skin to hold it in place. I stripped myself of pack and snow-shoes, set aside the boulder, lifted the skin and dove inside, drawing my bundle after me. I heard exclamations of astonishment as I replaced the flap and boulder.

The tepee was a large one, and, when I had pushed my way among piles of dry wood, there was a good blaze to greet my numbed fingers at the fire-pit. When my snow-blindness had somewhat passed I made out four muffled figures, sitting or reclining upon robes, and several pairs of black eyes snapping at me from blanket folds.

I made signs—lost, cold, hungry; must stay till the storm passes. The Indians shook their heads and remained mute, regarding me owlshly.

When I had recovered my normal temperature, I discovered a stack of frozen fish near the wood-piles—Iowa lake streams were then alive with pickerel, pike and sucker buffalo fish. From the pile I took several pickerel and laid them about the fire to thaw.

A woman now arose and put on fresh sticks.

This was encouraging, and, in much elation, while the blizzard shook the tepee poles, I turned, scraped, and prepared the fish. I cut thin slices of bacon from my slender stock, put a slice inside each fish and broiled them whole. In these proceedings my host, a man of middle age, his wife and two young girls, evinced a good deal of interest, and, at the end, ate their share of the fish with evident relish.

All this time I felt concerned about Joe, but I dared not let it be known that a Musquakie Indian

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had been in my company, for the Sioux and Iowas were at deadly enmity.

Our tepee, which was on grassland of the valley, was now so banked in drifts that it was tolerably comfortable, so I rolled myself in my robe and slept. Night had fallen when I awoke, but the blizzard still howled above our heads. A pot was hung over the fire and I was given a turtle-shell bowl, a ladle of buffalo horn, and signed to help myself to the thick soup composed of venison, dried corn and some kind of prairie root. When salted it was savory and good.

My host still refused to talk, shaking his head in token that he could not understand. So I smoked at ease, save for the worry about Joe. The Sioux and his woman took turns pulling at his long-stemmed pipe and the little girls played "odd or even" and "hide the moccasin," quite oblivious of my presence. We were now comfortably banked with snow to half the height of the tepee, and presently I fell asleep with the roar of the storm as a lullaby.

When morning came the sun again shone in a clear sky and upon the still, white blanket of earth.

I ate breakfast of broiled fish, bade my involuntary entertainers good-by and crawled out upon the drift, first taking pains to let them see my new Colt's revolver. Then I found myself in the midst of an encampment of eight or ten tepees half-buried in snow, with no one, not even a dog, astir outside their folds.

The morning was biting cold and travel good upon the hard drifts. I congratulated myself that I should

make an easy escape from this Sioux camp. Joe had told me the river in front ran into the Missouri near Sioux City. Hence my course was plain. As for my poor guide, I never expected to see him again.

As I shuffled along at a half-run, passing wind-blown skeletons of trees and tops of willows thrust up from the drifts, columns of steam arose here and there where the water fell over beaver-dams. At one point I saw the open water so thick with sluggish fish that one could have thrown them out with the hand. This abundant food supply was the secret of the isolated Sioux camp.

I pushed on at a fair rate of speed and must have gone over eight or ten miles when I saw an Indian run across a drift and dodge into a half-buried thicket in front of me.

Astonished, I paused, and saw the black head and shoulders of another rising above the drift. This one fired a rifle and his bullet sang in my ear. An instant later his fellow rose among the willow-tops and let fly two arrows, which I dodged as I might have dodged a snowball.

I saw at once that these Indians were Sioux, who had raced over the prairie to "bushwhack" me and had failed in timing their flight to the creek cover.

Something must be done quickly, so I decided to fight. I hastily unfolded my robe, dodging two more arrows meantime. Then I hung the robe in four folds over my left arm, and, carrying it as a shield to my body, advanced with leveled revolver.

The Indian among the willows again rose and shot

two arrows at once, straight and true, and so viciously that three folds of my heavy robe were pierced. For his arrows I returned a couple of bullets. One of them must have hit him, for the rascal threw up an arm with a shrill "*Ye-ough!*" and scampered toward his companion. Both took refuge behind the drift. Then I crossed the creek out of their limited range, for although I did not much fear the two, others might be close at hand. I hoped these might be young bucks who had followed me in the hope to put some feathers in their war-bonnets.

I pushed on, with an eye over my shoulder and keeping well away from the creek cover. Presently I saw my bushwhackers, standing upon their drift and looking after me—wistfully, no doubt. Ten minutes later I had passed a curve in the narrow valley, and, shortly afterward, was alarmed by the roar of a gun behind me. Again I halted and prepared to fight.

Within about fifteen minutes a solitary blanketed Indian came off the opposite hill and strode toward me. With revolver ready, I stood on my guard watching this muffled figure until I recognized Musquakie Joe. He came up with his big-bore buffalo gun under one arm and grinning from ear to ear.

"Did you hit them, Joe?" was my first question.

"*Na!*" said Joe. "Heap scare—run lak jack-rabbit."

In answer to further inquiry, Joe explained that he had burrowed in a drift under the creek-bank, where he had built a fire and kept warm. Like the willow grouse, he had broken out of his snow covering when

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the sun shone. He had followed my tracks and had been within sight when the Sioux tried to bushwhack me. They had finally seen him, but, muffled as he was, had thought him a recruit from their camp until his shot sent them flying.

We pushed on, keeping a wary lookout for a time, and finally reached Sioux City and returned home without further adventure of note.

A PIONEER WOMAN'S PERIL

A P I O N E E R W O M A N ' S P E R I L

At a recent "Old Settlers' Reunion" in Iowa, Mrs. Sarah Gibson, wife of a pioneer preacher, told this remarkable story of one incident in her life.

When her husband was a licentiate she had settled with him upon a timber claim in the deep woods on the Wisconsin side, above Hacher's Ferry. While Mr. Gibson worked at clearing his land he also preached at school-houses on either side of the river. He owned a horse and cart and the young wife accompanied her husband to his meetings whenever the weather permitted. He was careful never to leave her alone over night, except from necessity.

One day in April, after a hard rain-storm, the young wife had watched her husband cross the river ice. When, at night, he failed to return, and the ominous sounds of a spring "break-up" came to her ears, she was much alarmed for his safety. In the morning she saw a line of moving ice out in mid-current, and her fear grew greater. For hours she paced to and fro upon the bank, straining her eyes vainly across the growing tumult of the river and into the dark woods under the Iowa bluffs.

Her mind became disordered by her fears. In her fancy she saw her husband lying crippled and injured where his horse had slipped and fallen upon the bluff road. She would not think of him as drowned. She was sure he was suffering, needing

her assistance, and she determined to go to him at all hazards.

A half-mile below, just above the mouth of Chippewa Creek, whose roaring torrent now cut her off from all neighbors, there was a string of small islands—four of them in succession, lying across the river. Ice-gorges sometimes formed in the narrowed channels during a break-up, and she had heard the coulée trapper, "Old Louie," say that he could often cross the river there when it was impassable elsewhere.

Hurriedly but mechanically Sarah Gibson prepared for the journey. She put on warm clothing, filling her pockets with lint and bandages, thread and needles, a bottle of liniment and a pair of shears. This done, thinking only of her husband, she made her way as rapidly as possible among trees and bushes down to the first island channel. Here ice next the mainland was upheaved and broken, yet offered safe passage to the island.

She passed over to the second channel in the same hurried, mechanical fashion. The center of this channel had broken up and a great floe was even then grinding through, cracking and pushing up the shore ice at her feet. Absorbed in a single motive, she heeded not the danger, but leaped at once upon a moving ice-cake, crossed and ran out upon a heaving, cracking mass beyond.

For a minute she was tossed hither and thither and whirled around and about in dizzy gyrations, yet on she ran, leaping from mass to mass, sure-footed and confident as a wild creature. She reached

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and crossed the second island, only to find beyond it a cleared channel where the ice-floes were freely passing. Realizing that she could get no farther, she sank upon the wet earth and sat for a long time in a stupor of despair. She had no thought for her own escape.

Finally, when the necessity of returning forced itself upon her, she recrossed the island, only to find herself a prisoner, held fast by open currents. The shock of this discovery roused her, and she realized, like one awaking from a dream, that she had been to some extent the victim of hallucination.

Now she could understand that her husband might not have come to harm. Any one of a dozen contingencies might have detained him on the Iowa side. He was not one to run away from death or illness or any great need of his neighbors.

Hers was the desperate case, and all her energies must be bent upon self-preservation. She had included no food in her distracted preparations, and she was in danger of starving soon, for she had tasted nothing since the evening before.

In order to watch for temporary ice-jams and also to be where she might attract attention from either main shore, she went well out upon a bar at the upper extremity of the island. Here a cape of solid ice still projected into the current, sheering off the drift on either hand.

For a long time she stood resolutely watching the growing tumult upon the river. Then the ice-cape, on the edge of which she stood, was struck by an

immense and solid mass, and crushed as the shell of an egg is crushed. Huge cakes were broken off, turned up edgewise and rolled over, raking up mud, shells and even fish from the river-bottom.

Almost at Mrs. Gibson's feet three great paddle-fish or river sturgeon, which there greatly abounded, were thrown out upon the breaking ice. Two of these easily floundered into the current again; but the third, crushed and feebly flapping, was pushed inshore.

Regarding this casting up of the fish as providential, Mrs. Gibson seized the creature and dragged it back among the trees. The effort nearly exhausted her strength, and she determined to break her fast as quickly as possible. So she gathered drift stuff and built a fire immediately. When the fish was dead she found her shears effective in skinning and cutting away an edible portion. Its flesh, well roasted, seemed delicious after her fast.

She was warmly dressed, but there was a raw and chilly wind, so she gathered a great heap of drift-wood for her night fire and for a beacon light. She also gathered a heap of leaves for a bed, drying them somewhat by stirring them about in the heat from her fire.

Hardly had night fallen, however, when a new peril robbed her for a time of all thought of sleep. Stealthy, big-headed creatures were prowling among the tree-trunks near at hand—gaunt, hungry catamounts, with the scintillation of the firelight in their eyes. Three of these evil figures shifted about, slouching and squatting within a stone's throw.



“ . . . Mrs. Gibson seized the creature and dragged it back among the trees.”

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Greatly frightened, she shouted and threw sticks at them and they moved reluctantly a little farther back among the shadows. Then, trembling with fear, she drew what she did not need to save of the paddle-fish out to where the animals had been and re-treated. A moment later the big cats were snarling and scrambling over what must have been a royal feast for them. The fish had weighed not less than fifty pounds.

When the sturgeon's bones were picked, the catamounts slunk away satisfied with their meal, and the frightened woman saw them no more that night. Nevertheless, for fear of these creatures, she slept but fitfully, awaking often to put fresh sticks upon her blaze, which alone gave her any sense of security or comfort.

In the morning a yet greater peril was at hand. Swollen by the torrents of recent heavy rains, the flood had risen until its waters were trickling at her feet. In fresh alarm, she made haste to move her firewood to a slight mound, some three or four feet above the level of the water, apparently the highest point on the island.

Here a gnarled white oak grew, and around its trunk she piled driftwood until she could easily climb into the lower branches. She again made a fire and cooked the remainder of the fish—enough to last her several days should she be able to hold out against the flood.

While cooking the fish she again saw the evil-eyed catamounts moving among the trees near at hand.

Now the creatures seemed uneasy—as much alarmed, in fact, as she was herself. From this she judged that the rise of the river was already above its average overflow, as otherwise the wild creatures would have sought the mainland while there was ice on which to travel.

The roar of the flood, the crush and grinding of ice were now like the noise of a great hurricane. Inch by inch the water crept up the slopes of the mound. Almost by the force of resolution alone she managed to catch snatches of sleep while there was yet opportunity. It was well for her, indeed, that she could do so.

Before night fell she was compelled to take refuge in the white oak. She secured a perch where three branches forked, and with her pieces of cooked fish impaled upon twigs, made herself as comfortable as possible.

In the skeleton top of a black oak, near at hand, she soon discovered one of the catamounts. Almost above her head the creature lay along a topmost bough, looking down, with flattened ears and sour visage, upon the tumultuous flood. Peering among the tree-tops, she at last espied its mates in like positions, but she no longer feared them. They were neighbors in distress.

The river had now widened to a swiftly moving lake, with its ice-floes scattered like bergs at sea. There was no longer the booming grind and break of ice; but the roar of the flood among the island trees was awe-inspiring. Her tree was shaken from

A PIONEER WOMAN'S PERIL

the ground up as a strong house is shaken by heavy thunder.

With night came clouds, impenetrable darkness and a chill wind. This benumbing night air added to the terrors of her desperate situation. She was often forced to beat her hands and feet against the tree until they were bruised and sore. Otherwise she would have fallen from sheer inability to retain her hold among the branches.

But morning came at last. The flood had risen to an awful height. It seemed to sweep the river valley from bluff to bluff. The island trees showed only their skeleton tops above the dizzy sweep of waters.

The imprisoned woman could eat nothing that morning. A reaction had set in and she felt herself momentarily growing ill. Chills alternated with fever. At times her mind wandered, and only the mechanical habit of clinging saved her from dropping into the flood.

From a half-stupor succeeding a chill, she was roused by the report of a gun, and, looking out upon the water, as in a dream, she saw a boatman coming toward her. She saw him stoop and haul into his craft the dripping carcass of a catamount, and the next instant he was beneath her tree and she was looking into the face of Louie La Point, the coulée trapper.

She was, indeed, but a few feet above his boat, and in some fashion she let herself into it while the trapper plied a steady oar. She remembered, hazily, hear-

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ing him recount his morning's adventures in shooting beaver, lynxes and wildcats; of how he had seen the "critters" high among the trees and so had happened to find her.

He rowed her to a neighbor's across Chippewa Creek. There she was put to bed and knew nothing more for nine days. She was nursed back to life by her husband, who had himself suffered from a severe bilious attack which had prevented his return during those days and nights she had spent upon the island.

TAUK-SOK AND OOK-JOOK

TAUK-SOK AND OOK-JOOK

When my old friend, Adolph Borel, was stationed at a Hudson Bay Company's "house" at Chesterfield Inlet, there was a large village of the native "Huskies" near his post.

Among these Eskimo were two young brothers, who had much reputation among the "Bay" folk as hunters of seal and walrus. At the post, on account of their unpronounceable names, they were dubbed Tauk-Sok and Ook-Jook, after the many-voiced "old wives" duck and the famous "dog-faced" seal. These names finally stuck. Although but boys in years when Borel knew them, the brothers had made several excursions into far arctic seas and had already figured in the life-saving service of the Bay.

In the second year of his stay at the Inlet winter closed in much earlier than usual. In September there came an arctic blizzard, followed by freezing weather unusual at that season. Ice formed in great thickness around the shores of the Inlet and the Bay. Tide and high waves ran over this, and fell off, leaving a shore-strip green and glare, like an immense continuous glacier.

Sealing-boats in the habit of wintering at the Inlet came in one by one, until there was only the Penguin, a small tub of a whaler, left to be accounted for.

Thus matters stood when, one day, just before noon, there came in at the post an old Innuït with a

tale of shipwreck and disaster. He had been sealing far down the coast, and was coming in, when he descried two men off shore upon a huge iceberg. He had immediately put whip to his dogs and run them over shore ice, according to his account, a distance of thirty miles in less than three hours.

Instantly it was surmised that the Penguin must have "bumped" an iceberg and gone to pieces. The Hudson Bay berg is sometimes mountainous in proportions, withstanding the summer heat of years. Thus great submerged sections gradually rise near to the surface and are a constant menace to the Bay traffic.

Borel heard the Innuits' story and hurried to the Huskie village. Tauk-Sok and Ook-Jook were already preparing to go to the rescue of the imperiled sealers. A big walrus-sledge had been dragged out upon the shore ice and braces were being put on at the sides, for hitching extra teams. A dozen Eskimos were at work harnessing snarls of dogs. A yawl, dry, warm clothing, food and brandy were brought out from the factor's store. The yawl was lashed upon the sledge and a kayak, bound upon light runners, was hitched behind. All the best-trained and fleetest dogs of the Huskie village, fifty-one in all, were attached to the great sledge. Borel and three *attachés*, all good oarsmen, took seats inside the yawl, while the drivers stood outside the boat's rail. All the Innuits were armed with long-lashed dog-whips. At a word of command the Huskies among the dogs fell away, tumbling over one another.

T A U K - S O K A N D O O K - J O O K

The vicious whips hissed and cracked and instantly the scrambling, yelping packs drew together in a mad flight over the ice. Their speed was furious from the start. The ice was barely rough enough to give them footing, and the weight of the bone-shod walrus-sledge offered scarce impediment enough to straighten the traces. In a twinkling the post and its immediate surroundings vanished from sight.

The work of the Eskimo drivers was a marvel to Borel. These wild, skin-clad men were simply the embodiment of savage energy perfectly directed. Each one stood, clasping the yawl's rail between his knees, alert, his whip swung with unerring precision to flick the ear of a lagging dog, and each hooded face aglow with a fierce, controlled excitement.

A little after the start a dog slipped, scrambled, and was about to go under the sledge, when Tauk-Sok stooped quickly, snatched the struggling brute off its feet and flung it head foremost out among the racing packs. Another, unable to keep the terrific pace, finally went under the runners. Its trace was promptly cut, and Borel, looking back, saw the dog roll over and over an incredible number of times, then bounce to its feet and scamper homeward, apparently unhurt.

Numerous stranded ice-cakes and hummocks were encountered, and, in dodging these, the expert drivers and well-trained teams showed to the best advantage. Harsh, outlandish screams and the hiss and swish of the long, braided lash were continuous accompaniments of this furious drive.

Borel glanced at his timepiece frequently. At the end of thirty minutes, as he noted by a familiar promontory, the sledge had covered twelve miles, not including curves; in one hour, twenty-five miles. They were swiftly nearing the perishing men.

Presently the old Innuït signaled a halt, and Tauk-Sok shrieked at the dogs a long-drawn "*Ooo-gaarrreek!*" The teams instantly slackened their break-neck speed, pulling and hauling against one another, while the sledge ploughed among them until they rolled, fighting and yelping, in confused and tangled heaps. They threw themselves panting upon the ice, while Borel and his men and the Eskimo got off yawl and kayak and put to sea. Ook-Jook paddled the smaller craft.

A half-mile out from shore floated an immense berg surrounded by a family of smaller ones. Towards a great uplifted block, well to windward, the boats steered, directed by the old Innuït. At first nothing could be seen save the glaring ice walls and Borel feared greatly that the shipwrecked men had already perished. When the boats were half way out, though, two men were seen standing upon the crest of the floe. They feebly flourished their arms, but sank from sight again when assured that their signals had been answered. Evidently they were too nearly frozen to stand against the cutting wind.

The men in the yawl redoubled their exertions and shouted, in a futile effort to be heard, cries of encouragement. The ice-cake they were nearing seemed to be nearly rectangular in shape, with sheer walls and

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a crest lifted some forty feet or more above the sea's surface. Great rollers, which tossed yawl and kayak upon their long, easy swells, were frothing and boiling about its base. Keeping out of the rough waters, yawl and kayak passed around the berg, looking for a landing—if such a term may be used—and a place of ascent.

To the amazement and dismay of Borel and his men, a complete circuit of the floe revealed only sheer walls and inaccessible steeps. The men could never have climbed to its top. Their ship had been wrecked by the breaking up of a submarine glacier. The poor fellows were apparently as far from rescue as when they had first been sighted.

Borel's heart sank, and his white companions shook their heads in dismay. The men up there might jump or slide into the sea, but they would—benumbed and half-frozen as they were—go down like stones in the tumbling waters around the floe. Only the kayak and its half-aquatic paddler could approach near enough to pick up a swimmer should one, indeed, live to swim. The men must even now be perishing, else they would show themselves upon the edge of the ice-cap.

While Borel in despair thus reasoned, the Inuit brothers, as the boats tossed, shouted back and forth in harsh, ear-splitting yells. Presently the kayak touched, about its middle, at the yawl's stern and Tauk-Sok, who had been steering, sprang lightly upon it. He kept his feet, and took position with Ook-Jook's head between his knees. Soon he seized the

two-bladed paddle and propelled the light craft directly into the waters around the berg.

Borel watched the kayak in much anxiety. What could men do against the face of those ice walls and among the breakers, too? He questioned the old Inuit but, having no interpreter at hand, got no intelligent reply. The kayak was now tossing and pitching. It sunk from sight and rose again repeatedly. A half-dozen times the light craft was washed up against the face of the berg.

Still Tauk-Sok kept his feet, and presently the men saw that he had exchanged his paddle for a harpoon. Here and there he jabbed at the floe, and at length the amazed white men saw him leap off the kayak against the ice and stick, as a lump of clay might stick when thrown against the face of a wall. He had thrust his harpoon into a crevice and gained a footing. The kayak slid away into the trough of the sea.

Breathless the men watched, while the daring Inuit attempted the ascent of a steep which assuredly no polar bear could have climbed. A wave rolled up and half-buried him; yet he clung. Presently he was seen to mount a step higher—and then another. He was using his harpoon to cut steps. He leaned with his breast against the slanting face of ice and prodded carefully, cutting holes just above his head. He took his footing with infinite caution. Slowly he climbed higher and higher, while the kayak held its place like a water-fowl.

The yawl moved into danger in the men's eagerness to watch every motion of that perilous ascent.

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Now and then the Innuït reached standing-room upon some jutting ledge; again he was compelled to cut his steps laterally in order to avoid impossible steeps. Once he disappeared within a crevasse, but soon emerged to again cut his way upward.

After a half-hour of this perilous work—a time which seemed an age to the onlookers—the Eskimo had achieved the impossible. He had reached safe footing upon the cap of the floe.

Hearty cheers went up from the yawl. It is doubtful whether the stolid Innuït would have comprehended had he heard them. He moved on unconcernedly. He had performed an incredible feat, but how was he to save those benumbed, freezing and starving men?

While the men were speculating anxiously, Tauk-Sok disappeared beyond the ice-cap's rim and the kayak moved on. The yawl followed until the smaller craft rested under a projecting shelf where the breakers lost some of their force.

Borel and his men simply awaited developments. In the face of that sheer height, they could see nothing to be done. In their opinion there was but one hope for the sealers. If Tauk-Sok could carry a rope up his flight of steps, he could haul up clothing and food to provide for the sufferers until the sea abated.

After a time, and while they were still debating plans, a man appeared, crawling upon the topmost rim of ice, directly above the kayak's position. It was one of the sealers. The man hesitated for some seconds upon the brink of the ledge, then slid down-

ward; and the astonished white men saw that he dangled at the end of a harpoon-line, which they had not been able to see as Tauk-Sok had carried it. Slowly and with apparent safety the man was lowered. Ook-Jook, in the kayak, bobbing like an elongated cork, sat dipping his blades and looking upward.

Ook-Jook could catch the man, undoubtedly; could cut his line and bring him out of those waters; but it must be done at the cost of a drenching likely to finish the poor fellow before anything further could be done. He would be dropped directly into the sea, should the Eskimo fail a hand's-breadth in the first attempt to reach him.

There were brave men in the yawl, and they pushed into the crazy waters, shouting at Ook-Jook to get out of the way. By the dexterous steering of the old Innuït, they ran under the man in time to catch and drop him, dry and safe, at the yawl's bottom. Then they pulled away from the berg.

When they had reached safer waters, the half-frozen man was cased in warm furs and dosed with brandy to start his circulation. He told his story in a few words. The Penguin had been heaved out of the water, smashed and rolled back into the sea while she was coasting a "breaking" berg at perilously close quarters. Himself and a single companion had jumped and gained a footing upon the heaving ice. All the others must have perished.

Questioned by Borel as to how the Innuït had lowered him, he explained that the Huskie had made a windlass of his harpoon. He had drilled a hole to

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half its depth in the ice, wound a coil, and handled his weight at will. Evidently Tauk-Sok had watched operations on shipboard to good effect.

In a few minutes the second man was lowered. Again the yawl rowed in and made the rescue with only a light wetting, and again she had a hard fight to get out of the eddying swirls which met behind the berg. Then, with the rescued sealers warmly bundled—they had kept themselves from severe freezing for eighteen hours by lying together behind an ice-hummock—the yawl and kayak pulled around off the point at which Tauk-Sok had ascended.

Borel, in his anxiety for the brave Innuït, had his boat held to watch his descent. Already the Eskimo's black figure could be seen near the top of the floe. Tauk-Sok was feeling his way downward with even greater caution than he had used in going up.

And he had need.

For a third of the way or more he descended, moving apparently as the fly moves along a pane of glass. Poised above a fearful incline, the black figure cautiously moved sidewise. He advanced a half-dozen steps laterally, and then a foot slipped. Borel saw him cling by one hand for an instant, then whirl upon his back, clap his feet together and throw his hands above his head. He shot downward, like a well-aimed harpoon, into the sea.

There was a general groan of dismay in the yawl. They believed the brave fellow would never come out of those waters alive. They saw the kayak shoot out upon the crest of a wave, sink into a trough, toss up

against a face of ice, go down again. Spray and spume succeeded, and Ook-Jook, too, seemed to have gone down.

Then the boat tumbled out of the spray with a figure astride the paddler. Such cheering! The clerk and his *attachés* shouted themselves hoarse; even the half-frozen sealers crowed and screamed in a frenzy of delight. And well they might, for those daring and resourceful Northmen had snatched them out of the maw of death.

In two or three minutes the kayak pulled safely alongside the yawl, Tauk-Sok astride his brother's neck, dripping and grinning, quite as if his recent plunge had been taken with a relish for ice-cold baths.

The Penguin and the rest of its crew were never heard from again at the Inlet.

THE PROFESSOR'S GUN

THE PROFESSOR'S GUN

It is something over twenty years since I accompanied a small military expedition under Lieutenant Isaac Murphy, which went from the Rio Grande westward to establish a new post in Arizona. Several "tenderfoots," bent upon prospect and discovery, were allowed to travel with the command over a route beset with danger from attack by hostile Comanches and Apaches, and, although the lieutenant did not admit it, I think he was not altogether displeased by the addition to his fighting power of the half-dozen well-armed, well-mounted and well-provisioned civilians.

But at Socorro we were joined by an individual, a fresh arrival from the North, who attached himself to the expedition without so much as, "By your leave, gentlemen." A tall, ungainly, cadaverous and solemn person he was, his age guessable at anywhere between thirty and fifty. He was cross-eyed and so near-sighted that he wore cumbrous, large-bowed spectacles to correct his vision. He had the thin cheeks and hacking cough of a consumptive. Moreover, he had no riding animal, and the two burros he had been able to buy in Socorro, to which point his goods had been sent, were so heavily laden with his trappings that they looked dejected.

"See here, Mr. Man," said Lieutenant Murphy, as we broke camp, "you can't travel with this outfit. You're physically unfit for the trip and my two wagons are loaded to the limit."

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"No trouble to you, I trust, sir—h-m-m," said the stranger, who had already been dubbed "the Professor." "No real disability, sir—h-m-m; just a touch of bronchorrhœa—h-m-m; find this dry atmosphere a great help, sir." He spoke in a calm, decisive tone, but coughed at every other word. "I'll come on in your rear, sir; can't ride in saddle on account of gastritis—h-m-m—just a touch, sir."

"Good gracious!" muttered Murphy. "Bronchitis, gastritis, cross-eyes, false teeth and afoot! Well, sir," he added, in a louder tone, for the man was apparently somewhat deaf, "I suppose we must leave a trail behind us."

The tall stranger bowed gravely and went on with packing his burros, a task which he accomplished with surprising neatness and speed. When we moved away from Socorro he fell in respectfully behind our six-mule freight-wagons, came on at an unwearied swing for the twenty-four-mile stretch which brought us to our first water-hole, and coolly camped within our picket-lines.

"We'll lose him to-morrow," said Murphy to his mess. "Cacti!" and he chuckled contentedly.

Our trail the next day led over a high mesa carpeted with prickly-pear, a matting of thorns so dense that the passing of a half-dozen "freighters" could have offered no protection to feet less well-shod than those of a mule. Yet the Professor plodded undauntedly across this stretch, and, much to our astonishment, came into camp at night without limping.

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Our surprise gave place to a degree of respect when we noted that the Professor wore wooden shoes lined with chamois-skin. He certainly had proved himself an experienced traveler—and now his cheeks were showing sunburn and his cough seemed less incessant.

To the ruder jokers of the command the Professor afforded unlimited amusement. His ungainly figure and lantern jaws, his "buttermilk eye" and "double-back-action eye-gear," his air of intent gravity when packing, unpacking or when cooking his meals, his big gun-case, which measured the length of a burro and whacked its patient bearer, now and then, upon the jaw, his carefully guarded and never-opened packs, his general owliness—all furnished no end of fun to the cavalrymen.

It was inevitable that the man should overhear some of the passing gibes anent his uncommonness; but he continued to mind his own business with great gravity and gave no sign.

When we had fairly entered the Tularosa range the Professor was ordered to march with the command. He followed at his own distance, as before. As a walker, he might have been forever celebrated among us, had he not been destined to attain celebrity of another sort when we stepped into a Jicarilla trap upon the Mesa de los Lobos.

After ten days of marching we filed out of a tortuous cañon, one hot morning, upon the high plain, and, having by some chance taken the lesser of two trails, where cañon and road forked, we found that we

had escaped annihilation in a huge ditch only to meet a fierce Apache rush upon the mesa. Wild riders seemed to emerge—one hundred—two hundred—out of nowhere, suddenly “materializing” out of a shimmering mist of heat radiation, and they were upon us before we could form for defense. No ear in that tremendous din could hear Murphy’s roars of command.

It was “save himself who can,” except that no man thought of flight. Each trooper and civilian got behind horse, mule or wagon, drew his Colt and fired into the screeching, clattering mob, which charged home upon us in the characteristic Apache rush.

It was a thrilling, savage moment. Clouds of horsemen hurled themselves at us with deafening yells, discharging a rain of feathered shafts and lunging fiercely at horse and man with their long lances. They rode down and over and through our thin line, a veritable besom of destruction.

When this whirlwind of savagery had howled over us and the dust of it had lifted somewhat, we took account of our casualties. Of twenty-eight fighting men we had eighteen left uninjured. Three were killed outright and three disabled. Nine horses and mules had been killed or crippled.

The faces of the living were grave enough, and filled with graver foreboding when it became apparent that the Apaches had not met with severe repulse. They had carried off their dead and were drawn up on a ridge marked by clumps of greasewood a mile or so in our advance. In five minutes three thin

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columns of smoke arose among them and we knew that they were signaling for the approach of another band.

To go back into the cañons meant certain destruction; to go forward seemed equally perilous. But Murphy was a fighter; he feared the moral effect of entrenchment and so began to put things in fighting order for advance.

Four men were lowering the dead into a shallow pit when the Professor came up out of the cañon in our rear. We had reckoned him with the lost, but somehow the Apaches had missed him. He came among us with looks of concern.

"Why, why, men, this is—h-m-m—most unfortunate!" he said. His face betrayed sorrowful emotion as the dead were covered and a salute fired. Then he donned his hat and inquired after the enemy, of whose din his deaf ears had heard nothing. The Indians upon the ridge were pointed out to him.

The Professor straightened his lank figure, adjusted his spectacles and gazed intently toward the mirage-distorted figures and the thin wreaths of smoke which curled over them. Presently he spoke:

"Lieutenant, do you think—h-m-m—they'll come on again?"

"Sure!" said Murphy.

"Then," said the Professor, calmly, "then, Lieutenant, we must—h-m-m—must drive 'em off!"

Immediately he began to unpack his big gun-case. He worked deftly, taking from its long cover and unwinding a swaddled Creedmoor rifle of great power and range. This ponderous weapon, the barrel of

which had been specially made to the Professor's order, as I learned later, must have weighed fifteen or sixteen pounds. To it had been fitted a beautiful full-length telescope sight, with set-screws for regulating the elevation and windage.

A laugh broke out among the troopers, who were unable to resist the humor of the situation. Murphy grinned, but looked at the polished and costly target-gun with a degree of respect.

"So you'd like to try a shot," said the Lieutenant. "Well, I guess it won't do any harm."

"I must rest upon a wagon, Lieutenant—h-m-m. You'll have the mules removed, to give steadiness."

He spoke authoritatively and Murphy hesitated for an instant; then, with a quizzical look, he gave the requisite order. Soon the cover of the unhitched wagon had been lifted and the Professor stood upon a feed-box with his big gun resting well across some piled-up sacks of corn. He busied himself at once in making a careful estimate of the distance, in adjusting the set-screws of the telescope and in taking the gauge of a slightly adverse breeze.

Never shall I forget the derisive faces of Murphy's men, or the half-excited, half-deprecatory flush upon the Lieutenant's face as he stood, with leveled field-glass, to note where the first shot would strike. In the heat mirage the figures of the Apache horsemen were so distorted and magnified that, although nearly a mile distant, they were fair marks to the naked eye. Grouped, however, they made a great blurred patch upon the horizon.



" . . . Murphy threw up his hat . . . yelling and whooping."

THE PROFESSOR'S GUN

Two minutes passed, and still the Professor was busy with delicate adjustments; but then he got to work, and presently the roar of the Creedmoor burst forth. Some seconds of silence followed; then Murphy slapped his thigh with a whoop of triumph.

"You got him! By George, you got him!" he cried.

There were exclamations of incredulity from the troopers.

"No," said the Professor, still peering calmly through his telescope, "only the pony—h-m-m—the man has arisen."

Murphy sprang upon a "freighter," and again leveled his glass. His comments betrayed unwonted excitement.

"Right you are!" he declared. "The beggar's up and shifting. Say, they think it was an accident! They're spreading—think we can't do it again. Now, then, Professor, see that fellow at the right of the big greasewoods? Big chief, big medicine, togged and painted to kill. Now, then, if you—"

The crack of the target gun interrupted, and four seconds later Murphy threw up his hat and fell off the freighter, yelling and whooping like any crazy trooper of the line. He did not cheer alone. Almost every man of us had seen an Indian bowled out of his saddle at nearly two thousand yards.

Bang! bang! bang! went the Professor's gun as rapidly now as he could bring the cross-hairs of his telescope to bear, and the cloud of Apaches fled as if a thousand troopers were upon their heels. They were out of sight in no time, and the Professor slid

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off his perch, coolly wiping his rifle, while an excited and elated crowd cheered him to the echo.

That was the last of the Jicarillas. We had unlimbered "too much big gun" for them. Of course the command and its officers warmed to the Professor; yet when he parted company from us, in the friendly land of the Zuñis, we neither knew his name nor had we learned anything of his antecedents.

MICHAUD'S EXPLOIT

MICHAUD'S EXPLOIT

Trapper, boatman, interpreter, trader and freight-captain by turns, Felix Michaud had, when I knew him, spent forty years in the Upper Missouri and Platte countries. Short, stocky, of great breadth of shoulder and uncommon strength, he was of iron endurance at sixty. He was a man of singularly placid and even temper, yet of most adventurous spirit—cool, determined, alert, seeming never to be taken by surprise.

He was my captain in a wagon-march from the Northern Pacific road to the Black Hills, when every mile of our route from old Fort Fetterman was beset by hostile Sioux. Three times they attacked, only to find Michaud ready to receive them. The close order of our march and the unremitting vigilance exacted by our leader undoubtedly saved the band of thirty-five adventurers.

When Felix Michaud went to Fort Bridger from the Missouri country, in 1840 or thereabouts, he was a young man, untried among the trapper companies. Some weeks after his arrival, and in the time of revels at summer rendezvous, he had the misfortune, unwittingly, to provoke one of Bridger's fire-eaters—a hot-headed trapper who could not brook to be crossed without fighting. Felix was immediately challenged to fight, the challenger naming his own weapons—rifles at sixty paces.

The peaceable young Canadian, however, not only

refused to fight, but attempted to explain that he had meant no offense. This breach of frontier etiquette could not, of course, be overlooked; so Michaud was branded "squaw" and promptly cut by most of his new associates.

Some days later the offended trapper, somewhat in liquor, attacked Michaud with a pistol, declaring he would blow the "squaw Kanuck's brains out" if he did not immediately get a gun and fight; whereupon Felix promptly disarmed his opponent, seized the astonished trapper by the belt, bore him outside the fort's defenses and flung him, neck and heels, into "Black Fork swimming-hole." This matter raised such a laugh against the trapper that he did not renew his attack. In fact, when sober, he laughed as much about the affair as anyone.

Nevertheless, such was the mountain code that Michaud's reputation was not fully established. "Kanuck," as he came to be called, was tolerated merely as a good man at taking beaver and handy about the camps.

Two years later he was trapping with a small band near, or within territory now included in the National Park. Among these little-frequented mountains he and his companions gathered so great a harvest of pelts that when spring came their small outfit of ponies was found inadequate to pack all to the fort. Months of hot weather must elapse before the expedition could return, and no cache would preserve the furs from spoiling for so long. It thus became necessary to leave a man behind—one who could be trusted

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to care for the furs and also to hold the ground against invasion from a rival company.

The choice of a man was determined by lot, but Michaud was left out of the drawing. Some thought he would rejoice at this, but the young Canadian was much hurt at his comrades' lack of confidence in him. When the unlucky member, "Haze" Fenton, expressed a conviction that he should never see Fort Bridger again and made some final requests of a friend, Michaud promptly volunteered to stay with him. The trappers were surprised, but offered no objection to his remaining.

Thus Felix and the big, raw-boned Yankee, Haze, were left in a mountain wilderness to guard some thousands of dollars' worth of furs. As their winter dug-out was getting damp for the pelts, they fell to work with their axes and built upon the bank of a small lake a pine-log shack with a rough wareroom overhead for storage.

Weeks passed into months. The trappers fished, hunted, picked berries or lounged about in enforced idleness. Notwithstanding there were hostile tribes at no great distance, they saw no man, red or white, for four months, and were looking forward to the return of their friends, when Haze came in one evening from a ramble about the lake wearing a sober face.

"Kanuck," he said, setting down his rifle, "we've got comp'ny on this lake, and a mighty poor sort. Lope Vasquez and his gang, six of 'em, are camped down here a way."

Michaud said nothing, but his face must have

shown the concern he felt at this piece of unwelcome news.

Lope Vasquez, a cousin of Bridger's Spanish-Mexican partner, had been employed by the trader, William Sublette, but had been whipped out of two camps for stealing. Subsequently he had gathered, from the unprincipled sort, a band of free-trappers who were more than suspected of being free-booters as well.

Haze watched the effect of his news. "Guess you'll be climbin' out of these mountings right sudden, Kanuck," he said.

"Mebbe so, mebbe not," replied Michaud, in his terse and non-committal fashion.

They ate a supper of jerked venison and berries in silence. Then Felix got some dry deerskins and tied them up along the cross-pieces overhead.

"That's a good idea," admitted Haze, "but 't won't do any good. They know about the beaver. Some fellow got drunk at the fort and let it out among their friends or spies. They saw me as I came by their camp, but I didn't let on to see them. They've got us under close watch, and we've got to *cave* or fight—which?"

"Me—I t'ink fight," said Michaud, coolly.

"Three to one is big odds," said Haze, dubiously, "and they'll just simply watch for a chance to shoot us, like the sneaks they are, when we stir outside."

"All the same," replied Michaud, in his slow, imperturbable way, "me, I weel not run till eet ees necessaire."

"You talk brave enough," said Fenton, doggedly

and doubtfully. "Guess I'll stay around here as long as you will. We'll be served like two rats in a trap, that's all, but I'll stay just the same."

The trapper's apprehensions were, indeed, well founded as Michaud was soon to discover. The attack came sooner than they expected, and like a lightning stroke.

Fenton lay sleeping upon his blankets, while Michaud sat upon some skins with his back against a wall and rifle across his knees. The Canadian had removed a couple of boulders which filled a hollow under the logs at his side, thus making a way of escape, if escape should become necessary. Primarily, however, he wanted to listen, with his ear close to the ground, for any sounds of stealthy approach.

But the attack did not come in that manner. Michaud was aroused toward morning by a sudden rush of feet outside, and instantly there was a crash at the door. Its puncheon slabs—they had been pegged to cross-pieces—burst into the room, followed by a crowd of dark figures tumbling in at the opening.

Instantly Felix ducked into the hole he had made under the logs, and was outside in a twinkling. So Haze was the only "rat" found in the trap. Michaud waited only long enough to hear a short scuffle, and to know that Fenton had been secured and was beyond his present assistance; then he sped away among the bush and rocks. No one pursued, however, or came out to look after him. If the outlaws knew of his presence—and he felt sure that Haze would not en-

lighten them—they did not consider his escape as dangerous to their enterprise. Michaud did not believe they would kill Fenton if they could in any way use him.

The Canadian posted himself upon a height where he could overlook the shack and waited for daylight. There was no stir among the men until about sunrise, when the whole party marched out, Haze Fenton among them, each man bearing a pack of beaver upon his shoulders. Michaud at once made an accurate guess at their plans. He waited until they were well out of sight and hearing, and then descended to the deserted cabin.

The marauders had taken nothing but the more valuable bales of beaver and otter pelts, in packs of some sixty pounds each. Michaud furnished himself with a blanket, as much meat as he could easily carry, and leisurely set out upon their trail.

He had little difficulty in overtaking them, loaded as they were. He was very wary in his approach, watching them from cover and at a distance. As the country was exceedingly rough, he had not much trouble in keeping out of sight. Once he got the general direction of their course, he had no need to trail them.

They traveled to the northeast and Michaud knew they had come without ponies. They were packing their booty to the big lake of the Yellowstone, where they had canoes hidden, or if not, could hew them out of logs. Once on the great watercourse, they could easily drop down to the Missouri and sell their

plunder for enough to give each of them some six or eight hundred dollars.

All day Michaud followed, at one time getting close enough to see that Haze Fenton, with hands tied behind him, was packed like a burro, his sturdy shoulders bent under the weight that was strapped upon them. Michaud hoped for no greater success than to set the unwilling toiler free. To that end he was ready to incur any personal risk which did not involve obvious foolhardiness. That night he watched Vasquez's camp as an owl watches the burrows of whistling rabbits.

But the men slept in a row, with their feet to their camp-fire. Haze lay in their midst and one man, gun in hand, stood guard. Evidently they were running no unnecessary risks. In the morning, so near was Michaud that he could hear the men's voices as they cooked a breakfast of young "fool hens" which they had knocked over the evening before. He could see the grinning face of their black Mexican leader, who appeared to be in high good humor.

Again the Canadian followed through a day's slow march. Another night passed, but the vigilance in the camp proved unremitting.

On the following forenoon the route lay across a long stretch of rough, exceedingly tumbled bench lands which, from the description Michaud gave me, I think must have been ancient lava-beds.

In crossing these arduous stretches the outlaws followed an old elk or buffalo trail. Toward noon their line had become stretched out over a consider-

able distance along the path. A high wind was blowing almost in their faces. Here Michaud saw his opportunity for a bold stroke.

With the stealth of an Indian and the daring of Boone, he went swiftly forward, keeping under cover of rocks and crawling rapidly over exposed hummocks, until he had overtaken the rear straggler. Keeping softly behind until the man descended a little pitch, Michaud sprang upon his burdened shoulders and the fellow went down with a smothered yell.

He was quickly convinced of the uselessness of a struggle, and a gentle prick from Michaud's knife brought his hands across his back, where they were tied with the strings of his own pack. Michaud then tied the man's legs, smashed his gun upon a rock and sped on.

He caught the next man carrying his load upon his head and gave him a stunning blow in the back of the neck. To tie him and break his gun was the work of a moment.

Then, seeing a fellow, who was but a short distance in advance, go up on a little ridge and drop his pack to rest, Michaud covered him with his rifle and advanced rapidly along the trail. The man did not happen to turn around immediately. When he did, he was looking into the muzzle of the Canadian's gun at less than a dozen steps. His own rifle—like those of his fellows—was slung under his arm. He sprang to his feet, stared wildly at Michaud for an instant, and then put up his hands in token of surrender. He was made to lie upon his face, while Felix, with a



“With the stealth of an Indian he went swiftly forward.”

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knife in his teeth, made him fast as he had done the others.

Michaud now carried two cocked rifles, one in either hand, as he hurried forward on the trail. He hoped to overtake Haze Fenton next.

The ground was very rough in front and he could see nothing of the men in advance. He had gone but a short distance, however, when he came face to face with Lope Vasquez, at the bottom of a rock-worn waterway. The Mexican had dropped his pack and turned about, apparently to look after his fellows, or to give some direction to the next behind. In a twinkling the outlaw's gun was at his face and his bullet whistled through Michaud's skin cap, cutting, as he afterward discovered, the skin upon his left ear.

Michaud returned shot for shot, dropping one rifle and raising the other with mechanical swiftness, and the freebooter fell in his tracks. Before Felix could recover from astonishment at his own success and the narrowness of his escape, he heard a joyful shout close at hand, and saw Haze Fenton stumbling toward him.

Haze was almost ready to drop with fatigue and the weight of his load. He had been with Vasquez, and as the latter turned back, had seated himself to rest when he heard the shots. Instantly upon seeing the Mexican fall, he had divined the situation. His exultation may be imagined as the faithful comrade freed him from fetters and burden.

An extra rifle was quickly reloaded and the trappers hurried on together to overtake the other two of Lope's men. They were found at the foot of some

rocks awaiting their fellows. The stiff gale that was blowing had carried all suspicious sounds away from them. They were surprised to see the big Yankee coming, unloaded, but his hands were behind him, and apparently one of their mates was at his heels with a rifle in either hand; so they were caught off their guard.

Haze enjoyed their discomfiture immensely. Their guns were broken, and they were made to carry their packs back to their fellows. Then the five were set free, given what provision they had, told to care for their wounded leader, and take themselves out of the country as best they might.

The trappers guarded their furs for a day or two, and then, certain that the miscreants had taken themselves off for good, they cached the bales and returned to their shack.

The peltry was recovered two or three weeks later, after the coming of the band from Bridger's.

As for Felix Michaud, he could not be induced to take pay for the service he had rendered, but when he was chosen captain of the company he accepted joyfully.

THE BLIND COUGAR

THE BLIND COUGAR*

It was a good day for deer-hunting. Two or three inches of snow had fallen and the air seemed soft and heavy, as it does before a storm. We determined to utilize the favorable weather for the killing of our winter meat. Therefore, at about sunrise, my partner, Curtis, our Indian helper, Pete Debaw, and myself set out from our shack to make a circuit of the nearer hills.

In 1875 this rough Black Hills country abounded in big game—elk, deer, sheep, grizzlies, black bears, and mountain-lions. On that November day, at one o'clock or a little later, I had killed and hung up four blacktails and one cottontail buck. Then, in close pursuit of a wounded doe among a rough tumble of rock ledges, a serious accident befell me. Hot upon the trail, I was pushing through an undergrowth of cedar, when I burst from cover upon a precipitous slope and fell headlong. I dropped my gun upon the snow, and grasped in vain at bush and boulder to stay my downward flight. I pitched down an incline, rolled over and over, and dropped off the rim of a ledge some fifteen or twenty feet in height.

For some time I lay paralyzed, physically, by the shock of my fall. My face lay on the edge of a narrow shelf of rock and one of my arms overhung it. I had no power to retire from this perilous position, yet with a curious sense of helpless indifference I looked down into a black and dismal gully which I knew well

* Adapted.

was the "hidden cañon," as we had named it, of Spring Creek.

It was from twelve to twenty feet in width—a huge split between two masses of rock—and must have been nearly one hundred feet to the bottom. A small stream leaped and tumbled through the boulder-filled channel.

So narrow was the cleft where I lay that an active man could have leaped it at a running jump. On the opposite side was a mass of rocks rounding off to the left, and below this a rough, narrow slope along the rim of the notch.

"A poor place to look for deer," was my thought, and there was little likelihood of my hunting companions finding me soon, unless I could send my shouts to their ears. But as yet I had no voice for shouting.

At the end of half an hour the paralysis of my nerves had partially abated and I succeeded in rolling myself over and gaining a reclining posture against the ledge. In so doing, I discovered that my right shoulder was dislocated and that probably two of my ribs were cracked. I found that I was upon a shelf of rock some thirty feet in length and not more than seven or eight in width.

Still nothing seemed to matter greatly, and when presently a gust of wind whirled by and great feathery flakes began dropping spirally into the notch, I felt a lethargic sense of indifference.

From this hazy condition I was roused by seeing a great reddish yellow beast come out of a cleft in the



"I was roused by seeing a great reddish yellow beast."

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rocks just across the narrow cañon. It was a mountain-lion of large size, and it paused upon the slope with uplifted head and pricked ears, apparently listening and looking away toward the higher ground.

Now, for the first time since I had fallen, I felt a thrill of fear. If the big cat were hungry, how easily it might leap the gully and devour me where I lay! Most fervently I hoped the creature might trot away beyond the rocks.

But the lion turned its head and seemed to be looking directly at me. It walked deliberately down to the edge of the cleft, and for an instant I thought my time had come.

Still the animal showed no sign of having seen me. On the contrary, it turned immediately to one side, and began trotting back and forth in front of its lair. It traveled over a beat of some forty yards or more, wheeling with precision at the same point in each turn, and going over its path each time with precisely the same movement—a shuffling, gliding trot.

It thus passed and repassed within ten or twelve yards of where I lay. And now, with awakened faculties, I discovered that this big male lion was blind. Instead of the yellow-green balls within cruel slits there were two prominent grayish-white disks under its half-closed lids.

It was a blind cougar out for exercise. Surely, with the notch between us, there could be little danger from this unfortunate beast! Fascinated, curious, and forgetting my helpless condition, I watched the lithe, powerful, enormous cat promenading his beat—

a path which he had doubtless trodden many thousands of times. Just so many steps in one direction, just so many back over the same line. At one point he avoided a projecting boulder; at another passed round a broken cedar sapling. He swung himself back and forth with the regularity of a pendulum stroke.

Here, despite his infirmity, was no caged, hampered and rod-beaten creature of the menagerie. By some means, the blind lion had been well kept. His red-yellow coat was sleek and handsome and his great muscles moved and glided over each other like well-oiled parts of perfect machinery. He dropped his lower jaw now and then, and once gave a mighty yawn, displaying rows of fangs which might have rent the skin of an alligator. Once only he halted upon his beat to sharpen his claws upon a sandrock, and his great claws rasped and grated upon the stone in a horribly suggestive fashion. I rejoiced, indeed, that he was blind. And so I lay watching, while the big panther glided back and forth and the whirling snowflakes slipped off his glossy coat and padded the path for his feet.

And now again the wind whirled by in eddying gusts, flinging snowflakes and dry leaves across the notch; and out of a cross current nearly in front of his lair, the lion caught my scent!

Instantly the gliding, graceful figure was transformed, and a fierce, snarling beast reared upon its hind feet, sniffing in eager anxiety to find the prey. The lion whirled about several times, then made a leap

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to the right, then directly toward me. Then he lost the scent and crouched, his red muzzle quivering, his ears twitching curiously, while his tail whipped to and fro.

Now he rose again and moved, sniffing cautiously along the rim of the gully. He seemed to reason that the scented creature must have shifted its position. Again his nose took wind of me, and crouching, he sniffed down at the gaping cut as if to make sure of the direction. Then, as his ears were laid flat and his yellow claws were unsheathed to take firm grip upon the rock, I gave myself up for lost.

With his snarls menacing me and growing louder and louder, I knew the creature was certain of his ground. He had not been blind always and had leaped many times to the shelf where I lay. Horror-stricken, I watched him gather himself, and then vault in a sweeping curve above the chasm and alight upon the rocks within four or five steps of where I lay.

I expected instant death. My nerves were suddenly racked with cutting pains, which ran through my chest until I gasped for breath. And yet the snarling, sniffing lion did not spring upon me. He had jumped to windward of me and the air currents no longer carried the scent. He reared again upon his hind feet, sniffing anxiously. Then to my joy his bristles lowered, his savage aspect changed to one of distrust and he turned and leaped back across the cut.

He stood upon the brink for a moment in a listening attitude of suspicion, and then, trotting away, disappeared within his lair.

It was now snowing very fast, and, in the next few minutes, relieved of intense reacting pains, I did some hard thinking. I dared not shout to attract the attention of my fellow-hunters and I was in momentary fear of a reappearance of the puma, or, worse yet, of its mate.

The weather was warm, hardly at the freezing point, and I was warmly clothed. I might, I concluded, survive twenty-four hours and longer if let alone by the lions; and long before that time Curtis and Pete would be scouring the hills for me. Camp was not more than two miles distant. I decided to lie quiet in the snow until I should hear some sound of searching.

Within half an hour the wisdom of this course was made apparent. Then I saw, coming down out of the storm upon the far slope, two more red-yellow beasts, which soon proved to be the blind lion's mate and her well-grown cub.

I shrank in fear under my covering of snow. Some taint of my presence there was yet in the notch, for both the lions paused, at twenty steps or so, and snarled angrily, with bristling backs and nervous twitchings of their tails.

For a moment the two seemed to be glaring straight at me, and I closed my eyes in fearful suspense. I waited, hardly breathing for some seconds; then, hearing no more of the cougars, I looked again, to find that they had passed on and gone into their lair. It was but a moment, however, before they reappeared. This time the blind male was with them.

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The three passed together up the slope in lithe, long jumps, and went over the ridge beyond. There had been a kill somewhere and the blind lion's mate and cub had come dutifully to conduct him to the feast.

Under safer circumstances, I should have felt the keenest interest in this evidence of family devotion among fierce beasts, and, with perfect opportunity, I should have hesitated to kill either the dam or her cub. As it was, I was to witness something very like a tragedy.

The lions had been gone a half-hour, perhaps, when I heard the booming crack, crack, of a rifle just over the rock ridge in front of me. I answered the shots with a halloo as lusty as I could give and hitched myself to a more conspicuous posture against the ledge. I shouted again and again—a rather feeble wail, but loud enough to be heard at a considerable distance.

Then, as if by magic, I was confronted by the three lions, which had slid down an inward curve of the rock ledge upon my left. They came on in great bounds to within fifteen or twenty yards of my perch. There, catching sight of me, the two foremost came to a halt, and united their voices in menace. It was easy to see that something exciting and unusual had happened to the puma family. The blind one, apparently cowed by his helplessness, slunk to his cavern, muttering hoarsely as he ran. Despite their savage demonstrations, the dam and her cub did not attack.

Some new fear seemed to possess them. They whirled about repeatedly, to guard against surprises.

They flung themselves upon the snow, and lashed their tails excitedly.

I understood that some one—Curtis or Pete, doubtless—had been shooting at them. Perhaps for the first time they had heard the thunder of a gun and the hissing whine of bullets.

Then a rifle cracked again, this time close at hand, and I saw the cougar dam flatten out upon the snow with a bullet through her brain. The cub bounced about wildly, spitting and hissing, until two or three more shots were fired, when it, too, dropped in its tracks, dead. Looking in the direction of the firing, I saw our Indian, Pete, searching for a way to descend the ledge.

While Pete was hunting for a path, the blind lion ran out of his lair, which he must have considered unsafe against the new foe. The beast showed intense excitement. He stopped over the bodies of his dead mate and cub and sniffed at them in apparent great anxiety. Then his tail drooped and his hair shrank upon his skin. A great fear had seized him. Suddenly he uttered a strange, whining lament, sprang toward the cañon cleft and leaped into its abyss.

Was it a case of suicide? It has always seemed so to me, and yet, in his sudden sense of loss, in his great fear and excitement, the creature may have had no other aim than mad flight and may have gone to his death quite by accident.

I was as much overjoyed as Pete was astonished at our meeting. Before noon the Indian had hung up a deer on the ridge, and when he returned to get the

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meat he found three lions had torn down the carcass. He fired and missed, and as the lions ran he had followed, shooting at them as long as they were in sight.

By making a strenuous effort I found that I could stand on my feet, but I was not released from my shelf until the Indian procured an axe and bridged the gulch with poles.

OUR UNINVITED GUEST

OUR UNINVITED GUEST

If my brother were not a very good shot with the rifle, I should not be living to tell this true story.

I am seventeen years old. We live on a horse ranch about twenty miles from Jackson's Hole, which I suppose pretty nearly everybody knows about. The country is very wild and rugged around our ranch. Great scraggly mountains that always wear white ribbons of snow in summer, stick up against the sky like thunder-heads, and some of them would be about as difficult to climb.

The adventure which befell Ferdinand and me—principally me—happened at our logging-camp in Two-Owe-Tee Pass. Last fall father bought a large herd of Oregon half-breeds and new corrals and winter sheds had to be built; and we had, besides, to replace our old ones. As this building would take a great many wagon-loads of pine logs, and as, in these parts, no one could be hired to handle an axe, we had to do the work ourselves; Ferdinand being a good chopper, the job of felling the timber was given to him. I was sent to help.

We went to work on the first of October. The best pine timber here grows well up on the mountains and we made camp at the edge of a belt six miles from home. We built a small pole shack, enclosed on three sides, and stretched some ropes across the opening to keep out horses, cattle and wild animals.

It was what we called a "rickety" place to get down

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logs. The trees grew upon a steep hillside and had to be skidded down forty or fifty rods into a gulch before they could be loaded on a wagon. I helped skid the timbers and did the hauling with a four-mule team. Doing our best, we could manage only one load each day.

At our camp, built upon a flat-iron bench, we passed the evenings pleasantly. After a hard day's work we certainly enjoyed our meals, at which we had always fried venison or pine hen, with plenty of thick sorghum, which we both liked to spread on our bread. Our sorghum-barrel, with two or three inches of candied syrup at the bottom, was set outside the shack with our water-barrel, and both were covered with planks which were held in place by big stones.

Cattle and horses seldom range so high in the fall, and they did not trouble us; but at first we were bothered a good deal by bob-cats. There was a big family of these familiar "stump-tails" up in the gulch, and they raided our meat on several occasions. One night two of the hungry rascals got overbold, came inside the shack and tore down some fresh venison which we had hung up to dry. We were roused from sleep and pretty well frightened by the racket, but they scampered away with the meat before we could interfere.

That made Ferdinand angry enough. The next day he worked with unusual speed chopping in the forenoon, and so got time after dinner to go after the cats. He found four near their den. They were lying upon some rocks sunning themselves, and he

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shot them as fast as he could work the lever of his gun. Ferdinand is what sportsmen call a "snap shot."

The next day he killed two more cats, after watching some time for them, and a few days later he shot another that was lurking about the shack at sunset. His good shooting rid us of the bob-cats. We spent some evenings in tanning their skins, which were made into a fine lap-robe and afterward sold for twelve dollars.

There were plenty of silver-tips and grizzlies in the pass and on the mountains, but we were not afraid of them. If bears are let alone they will not attack people. But where we were, close to the National Park, where they are not only not hunted but are allowed to forage about the government camps, they are likely to be troublesome to campers who leave things lying about. It was chiefly to keep away these big fellows, that are afraid of anything resembling a snare, that we stretched the ropes across our wide doorway.

We saw fresh bear sign now and then, but for more than three weeks not one came near our shack. Then one morning a young silver-tip came up out of the gulch and coolly looked us over while we were working with the skids. We watched the fellow for a minute, and then Ferdinand ran for his Bullard rifle. Seeing him run down the hill, the bear ran, too, and so escaped any harm. We knew then there was a family of bears somewhere near and that we might expect a call from Mrs. Ephraim at any time.

I saw her first; and I have some scars to certify to

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the fact; but at the outset my sight of her was merely comical. I was made aware of the she-bear's arrival by the bucking of my lead mules. Just as I was driving out of the chaparral to our bench, these mules, "Long Tom" and "Whitey," began to jump furiously. They were out of their traces and into the bushes in a trice. The big, steady wheelers, however, brought them to a standstill.

I soon discovered what had frightened them so. On the bench a few rods from the shack a bear was doing tumbling that surprised me more than anything of the sort that I saw in Hagenback's Menagerie at the World's Fair.

My bear was not on a barrel, but in one; and in trying to get out she was bobbing and rolling around, every now and then breaking into a frantic, wabbling dance, so funny that it made me scream with delight. I got my team hitched among the bush and ran to take part in a "circus" which I think no boy could have resisted. The chief performer was a big silver-tip bear, whose head and shoulders were wedged tightly into a molasses barrel stout enough to resist tons of pressure. So long as the barrel held together the bear was perfectly helpless to do any harm, so I had no fear in going as close as I could get and watching the free performance. It was easy to guess what had happened.

Mrs. Ephraim had overturned our sorghum barrel and gone into it after the sweets. She had forced herself into the barrel until she could reach the bottom with her snout, and had quickly licked up the last



“The chief performer was a big silver-tip bear”

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grain of sorghum. Then she had tried to back out, and the barrel, of course, had backed with her. Then, getting frightened, she had begun to rear, with the result that her bulging shoulders were hooped tighter than a drum.

I started to run to the shack to get Ferdinand's rifle; but just then the bear was tumbling about close to a pitch of the gulch and I was afraid she would fall over. I did not want the sport to end so soon; and besides, I saw a chance to get a good bear-skin robe without much effort. So I ran in behind her, kicked her gambrels hard and shouted like a Shoshone Indian in order to turn her back.

She turned and went a little way back from the edge of the gulch then, but, not being able to see, tripped over a root and lost her footing.

When the confused animal fell upon her side I rolled the barrel toward the shack until she set her hind claws into the ground and got the best of me. In the excitement I got my boot-leg torn and a skin-scratch on the leg, but I had a great deal of fun getting her back to the shack.

Then I went inside for the gun, but found that Ferdinand had taken it up on the mountain. So I shouted to him to come quick and bring the rifle. By this time the bear was wobbling and tumbling toward the gulch again.

As quickly as I could I got a rope and managed to tangle it about one of her free legs. My lariat was too short to manage both legs, or I could have upset her completely. I did not dare throw it over the

barrel, for fear of liberating her, so—she at one end of the rope, I at the other—we swung around like an Italian with a dancing bear.

I shouted and jerked this way and that, in the struggle to keep the bear up on the level ground. Her whoopings and gruntings in the barrel sounded like a big dog barking in a bass drum. In my excitement I felt no fear, but enjoyed the performance and laughed till my sides ached. I believed that I had discovered a sure way to trap grizzlies, and resolved that I would put out molasses-barrels all over the mountains.

But, in spite of all my pulling and hauling, the bear pretty soon began to go down-hill. Then there was an exciting time. Bear and barrel would fall and roll over and over until my tugging at the rope brought their heads downhill. Then the bear's legs would work like piston-rods until she swung herself around and rolled again. But she could not get upon her feet. All this time, I suppose, she was growing more and more angry, but as her forefeet and legs were tightly covered by the barrel, she had no way of showing her rage except by dancing more and more frantically and bellowing into the barrel.

At last we tumbled down into a pocket in the midst of a growth of young quaking-asp. Most of the trees were small, and there was a good deal of underbrush; but some of the young asps were several inches in diameter and able to offer a very fair leverage. Still, I did not see any more danger there than on the higher ground; and as it lessened the chances



“ . . . The bear caught me with a blow on the shoulder.”

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of the bear's going over the side of the gulch, I was rather glad she had dropped into the pocket.

Here, however, the bear got to her legs again and tore around frightfully. The way she thrashed among the bushes was wonderful, and she seemed to know what she was doing, too. Before I had time to think, she caught the chimes of the barrel between two trees in a squeeze that burst it open and set her free to face me as I stood there empty-handed. The tables were turned, indeed!

Her first motion after she was free was to cuff the barrel, and she sent what was left of it—a big, forty-gallon cask—twirling over the tops of the bushes as a boy would fling a humming-top. Then rearing, she clawed at my face. The sight she presented, with head and shoulders smeared with molasses, might have made more fun for me if matters had not suddenly become so serious.

As it was I turned to run; but the bear caught me with a blow on the shoulder that threw me headlong to the ground. I fell upon my breast, and instinct, as I think, made me instantly bury my face in my arms and draw in my head like a turtle.

The bear charged savagely and set her teeth into my right shoulder. That was an awful minute. I felt her terrible tusks going through my clothes and into my flesh, and heard my collar-bone break as plainly as I could have heard the snapping of a stick under foot.

In spite of wanting to scream with the pain, I had sense enough to set my teeth and pretend to be dead,

The savage old she-bear shook me for a few seconds, and it is a fact that the shaking seemed to paralyze me and lessen my suffering—just as Doctor Livingstone was affected when the lion shook him in Africa—but I still knew quite well what was going on. Finding my body limp like a dead thing, the bear loosened her jaws and sniffed me over, as if to determine whether her prey were good to eat.

She growled savagely and “whoofed” two or three times, as if daring me to stir and show myself alive; then she rolled me over with her snout and thrust her ugly muzzle right into my face. Ugh! I can feel that cold, sticky nose yet, whenever I think about it, and the remembrance makes the shivers run down my back.

I dared not stir a muscle. I held my breath till she turned to look up toward the shack. She seemed to be considering whether it were best to stay in that vicinity any longer. Anyone can imagine how fervently I hoped she would decide to retreat.

She did retreat, but she took me with her. First, however, she walked all around me several times, sniffing at me every time. Then she walked a few steps away, to the place where the staves of the wrecked molasses-barrel lay. These she pawed over and sniffed, as if she wanted to find out what it was that had held her prisoner so long; or perhaps she thought there might be some live thing hidden there.

All this time I lay perfectly still, watching her out of the corner of my eye, and hoping every minute she would start for her den and her young ones.

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Instead of that, she came back to me. I felt the grip of her jaws upon my arm, and the next instant she was dragging me down through the bushes into the cañon. I cannot tell all that I thought in that awful time. I tried not to think, but only to hang from the bear's jaws a dead-weight, and so to save my life as long as possible.

I knew perfectly that the beast was dragging me away to some den or safe retreat, where she and her cubs could devour me at leisure. My only hope of escape was the chance that she might drop me somewhere for dead and go to find her young ones.

Down through the chaparral the old beast dragged me. The brush scratched my face and hands and now and then she caught her claws in my coat and tore them out, pinching my arm dreadfully as she pulled. I suppose I know how it feels to have an arm roughly amputated, for the paralysis of feeling was passing off and I was in horrible pain.

I was glad when we reached the dry bed of the cañon, for there the bear dragged me easily over the sand. She carried me up the bed now, going at a shuffling half-trot, just as a hog carries a chicken by the wing and with as little trouble.

The pain in my arm and shoulder got worse and worse and that, with my fright, must have made me half-delirious, for about all I can remember of thinking, near the end of the terrible half-mile over which the brute dragged me, was no thinking at all, but just a foolish rhyme that ran buzzing in my brain:

M Y H O S T T H E E N E M Y

See-saw, teteraw,
Eat 'em raw,
Eat 'em raw.

Just these silly verses jangled in my mind as I was lugged like a bedraggled chicken over the sand.

I felt neither surprise nor elation when I saw Ferdinand running on the trail behind us; but I remember that his face, almost black with exertion, had a tense and terrible look which gave me a curious thrill, and that when he shouted at the bear there was something awful in the tone.

When she dropped me to look back and threaten the new enemy I ventured to raise my head. I saw my brother stop and fling his gun up exactly as he does in shooting at blacktail deer on the run; and as the bear stood over me it seemed to me that I was looking straight into the muzzle of his rifle. There was a puff of smoke, the sharp "whang!" of the gun, and before my mind had sufficiently recovered from its daze, so that I could fully realize what was going on, Ferdinand lifted me up and began rocking me back and forth in his arms.

"Oh, you poor boy, you poor, dear boy!" he kept saying, not knowing that he was hurting my wounded arm and shoulder. He cried like a whipped child.

He could not realize at first that I was neither dead nor dying. He had heard my shouts, but had been a long way up the mountain. He had come at a run, discovered quickly what had happened and had followed us as fast as he could.

His practice at snap-shooting very likely saved

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both our lives, for the bear was stone-dead, with a bullet shot true to the brain.

I had to be carried all the way back to the shack, and when Ferdinand got me home I was in a high state of fever. I was ill for about three weeks. I wish I could say that we had saved that old she-bear's skin, but I cannot, for the wolves had torn her all to pieces when Ferdinand went back to the cañon.

BEAUPRE'S TALE OF BOLERAT

BEAUPRE'S TALE OF BOLERAT

My great-grandfather was a *coureur de bois*. He was not of the natives of Canada—but no, he was a young gentleman of France. Yes, sir, I say it—a gentleman, of the province of Aube. His name was Etienne Bolerat. His blood was always hot and quick when they told him tales of the New France.

He went to Quebec; just from school. He was still a young man when he had organized his own company of traders and voyagers. This he did at Detroit; then they went to the upper Mississippi country. Etienne was a good man, and when he loved a Sac girl, the daughter of a chief, he took her to St. Louis to the priest; yes, sir, and they were married fast. Blue Bird, that was Etienne's wife, was my great-grandmother, and she was the best woman!

What happened to them is strange and very exciting, and it is told among us—in the family. Etienne had a trading-post at the mouth of Black River, above Prairie du Chien. His fort was well defended. It had stockades of heavy posts with palisades of sharpened poles—but who could defend against the great war-parties!

The Black River post was never safe for anybody—not because of a quarrel between the French and the Indians—no, sir, that country was all disputed ground among the tribes, and war-parties were passing to and

fro and they would fight with each other. Then it was bad to be among them, for they were very jealous of each other.

But the trader was anxious to keep clear of those feuds. Yes, sir, he had good reason. But it was a good place to trade. The tribes agreed to be at peace when they came to the fort to trade skins in the summer season.

One day at the fort, when the ice went out, some Winnebagoes and their women came down Black River in canoes. Those Indians made brush wicky-ups and went into camp near the post. They stayed for about a week, I guess, trading a little, and bringing in skins one or two at a time. They were slow and cautious about their trade, those Indians—and why? Because my great-grandfather did not trade fire-water, and so they kept the sober mind, to make a good count each time.

Those Winnebagoes kept a sentinel at watch on the bluffs above the fort all the time, for it was not the time of peace.

Etienne had only nine or ten men with him that year. One of those was his store-keeper, a man named Fremeau, and there were some Canadian trappers and metis—half-breeds. The only women were two, a Menominee woman, and Blue Bird, Etienne's young wife.

Well, one warm morning when the Winnebagoes were there, my great-grandmother, who was christened Anastasie, and Fremeau's wife, they took their blankets and soiled clothes down to the river to wash.

BEAUPRE'S TALE OF BOLERAT

They washed on rubbing-boards, standing knee-deep in the water.

One of those Winnebagoes, an old man with a lance-spear, was watching for fish. He paid no heed to the women, not even to look at them. They were talking a kind of French picked up from their men, until Blue Bird's young one—that was my grandmother—began bawling, and Blue Bird began to sing to it.

The baby lay on some skins on the bank and so, to stop its crying, Blue Bird turned toward it and shook her finger. She began to chant a chant which she did not herself understand. She sang it to please her baby. It was a chant she had learned of her mother's mother, who was an Ojibwa woman, who had been captured by the Sacs. That was misfortune surely. The words she sang were a part of the ancient great chant which is still sung at the most solemn medicine ceremonies of the Ojibwa.

"Sge! Tss-tss-tss!" hissed Fremeau's wife, and she motioned my great-grandmother to stop singing. But Blue Bird thought her friend had seen a water-snake, and she herself was not afraid of snakes, and so she chanted on at the top of her voice. Then the old Winnebago, who was fishing, came down from his rocks and stalked, scowling, past the women. He hurried to his camp.

Fremeau's squaw was scared. "Let us hurry away," she said; "you sang the *midé* song of the lake Indians! Now the Winnebagoes will kill us all because they think you are Ojibwa."

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Then Bolerat's wife was frightened, too. She caught up her young one and went to her husband and told him all what had happened.

"Pah!" said Etienne, "don't let Fremeau's old humbug of a squaw frighten you, *ma cherie*. She is full of belief in witches and wizards and *loups-garoux* and all sorts of devils. Ha, ha, *mignonne*, suppose the Winnebagoes shall be mad a little, won't a fathom of tobacco make all right again?"

And when Fremeau was told he simply said: "Pah! Psst!"

Nobody thought anything further, but just the two women. And when the Winnebagoes suddenly broke camp and moved off, the men at Black River post they thought nothing strange.

Well, the early summer as usual brought together, all in friendliness for this time, all the bands of Sacs, Foxes, Sioux, Pottawottomies, Musquakies, and Winterers, for the trading and the games and horse-racing and the fun. And bateaux came, too, with cargoes of powder from the new works down the Mississippi.

Powder was a very valuable thing in those days, but Etienne and Fremeau had never seen it so cheap as now it was. It did not cost half as much from these new mills as had cost just to freight it across from Detroit. So they bought a great quantity—the whole lot that was fetched up the river. Yes, sir, and after the Indians were gone, they began to lay masonry for a magazine—a powder-house.

It was while they were building this magazine that the Winnebagoes—oh, a great company—came against

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them, half-naked and marching and daubed with paints and carrying many weapons—mostly the bow and arrow and tomahawk. This war-party came out of Black River Valley, and they marched directly past Etienne's fort and camped in timber, at the foot of the bluffs in its rear. These Indians came on foot, because the water was very low in their country, though there was plenty in the Mississippi.

The Winnebagoes were out for blood. Bolerat and Fremeau could see that, all right. The traders felt much alarm, for they had no cannon, and they were too few to stand against so great a company. The Winnebagoes knew this, and they began, very soon, to be saucy.

My great-grandfather and his fellows were scared, but they got ready to fight all the same. While they were busy getting ready to make the defense, Blue Bird came to her husband with a plan for his safety. "This is your child," she said, putting her baby into his arms; "the Winnebagoes are angry with me. They are as the grass-blades and you cannot resist them. I will go out to them now and they will go away and will not harm you."

"And what will happen to you?" says Etienne.

"I am for the fire," says Blue Bird, just cool and sad like that. "It is so, my husband."

Huh? Yes, sir, that was my great-grandmother!

"So?" says Bolerat, "we'll see about that. I can yet pull the trigger of a gun. Go in now, dear wife, and take good care of the little Bolerat."

Blue Bird departed obediently as an Indian woman

does, but she looked displeased, for she had thought her plan a very proper one. Her husband, seeing this, locked her in a room and put a guard on her window. Yes, sir, that was my great-grandmother!

The young captain, Etienne, knew what those Winnebagoes came for, but he pretended not. He parleyed with them, saying the Pottawottomies, their enemies, had not come up since the spring trade. Perhaps he deceived them with this pretense—anyway they did not attack that night. But in the morning a company of their chiefs and high warriors came before the fort's gates and demanded to be let in.

Now the captain had already stationed Fremeau and his *coureurs de bois* at the port-holes with instructions not to fire until he should give the word. He went to the front palisade, ordered the guard aside, and himself threw the gate wide open. He bade his visitors welcome. No one knew his intent, and so they came inside, a great crowd of armed savages.

Fremeau, who was looking out at the fort's gable, was astonished to see his captain walking in with four-score Indians at his heels. Bolerat led them to the door of the great store-room below.

"*Baptême!*" says Fremeau, "these captains from France! They are all crazy; they learn nothing about Indians until their scalps are taken."

"Bolerat is crazy for sure," said his men with Fremeau. They felt the hair prickle on their scalps. Then Fremeau heard Bolerat calling to him to come below.

Fremeau went down by a short ladder and dropped

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into the midst of that painted crew. Yes, sir, he was brave enough, was Fremeau. The Indians stood together looking mighty ugly, and with knives and tomahawks displayed. The standing-room was pretty well packed with them, and they expected the trader to give them what they should ask for.

"Come," said Bolerat to Fremeau, "interpret me what these Indians want. Ask if they come to make trade as others do."

Fremeau knew a little of the Winnebago tongue. Etienne knew nothing.

"Hau! hau! Mapzaumee, hau! hau!" Fremeau greeted them. They grunted like sulky bears, but said nothing. Then Fremeau filled a peace-pipe and offered it to the foremost chiefs. This was rejected. Meantime Etienne Bolerat seated himself upon a pyramid of powder kegs in the rear of the room.

"Have not my brothers come to trade?" asked Fremeau—and then he talked about the valuable goods in stock until the head chief made an angry sign.

"We cannot trade with the Frenchmen," says this fellow, "while the *midé* woman of the Ojibwas is in their lodges. She is a medicine-witch and the daughter of dogs of an evil spirit."

Fremeau interpreted this to Bolerat.

"Very well," said my great-grandfather. "Tell my brothers I have many presents to make them in place of the Ojibwa woman. See, here is much powder; enough to blow away this fort and the bluff on which it stands." And he tossed up in his hand some he had taken from an open cask.

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While Freneau explained his words, Bolerat drew a pistol from his belt, cocked it, and thrust its muzzle into the loose powder.

"Tell these scoundrels to go," he said, and his face went black with anger. "If they stop here one minute longer, I'll blow this place and all that's in it to atoms!"

His acts scared the Indians; and when his words were interpreted, their jaws lengthened. They knew what must follow the firing of that pistol. Yes, sir, and the deadly gleam in my great-grandfather's eyes convinced them for sure he meant what he said.

Well, those Winnebagoes crowded out at the door like sheep out of a gateway. They were so scared, they fell over each other and so ran away to their camp.

Freneau and all the rest of Bolerat's men laughed till their sides ached, and they saw, too, that my great-grandfather knew what he was about all right.

The people at the fort now hoped that the Winnebagoes would go away in peace; but no, sir, that night was very dark, and about midnight the palisades were fired in a dozen places by skulking Indians. The dry timbers burned like matches, too. The bullets and arrows came thick and fast against the fort, and the Indians yelled and the flames crackled until the whole of the stockade was on fire. Then, if the block-house had not been built of peeled logs, well—me, I would not tell this story.

The roof was of turf, and so the buildings escaped. The Winnebagoes ran away when they had set the fires.

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They were afraid of the powder. Though the fort did not catch on fire that night, the defenders were bad enough off in the morning. That was when they discovered all the Indians advancing from inland rolling logs before them and carrying brush and poles for defense against bullets.

They would soon be raining bullets and burning arrows on the block-house. Bolerat saw that his buildings would be set afire soon, and so he got ready for his last move. He told his men to open fire on the Indians, strong. Then he ran to the river-bluff in front of the fort. He found the river-front clear of Indians and saw that his canoes lay there all right.

My great-grandfather ran back and told all his people to collect such arms and goods as they could carry, and then he ordered them to hurry down to the river, man the canoes and push out to a safe distance.

"I'll keep the Winnebagoes off," he said, "till you get out into the river. There wait for me."

The men objected. They wanted to stay with their captain. But Etienne insisted. His wife would not leave him. She fought the men with her knife to stay with her husband. So Etienne had her bound hand and foot and carried to the canoes. Yes, sir, that was my great-grandmother, Anastasie Blue Bird.

Well, the fort people kept behind their buildings and slipped over the river-bluff, while the Winnebagoes expected them to stay and fight.

Meantime Bolerat got ready to save his people from pursuit. As the Winnebagoes were not yet within sure shooting distance, Etienne ran outside and

threw a lot of melted bear's grease on the dry logs of the fort and set them on fire in many places. Then he threw the doors wide open and knocked a wide plank off one of them. He carried the plank and a keg of powder outside and stood where all the Indians could see him.

They howled and yelled and shot at him, so he raised the door plank in his front for protection. Then he pointed to a keg of powder he had carried outside, and shook a burning fire-brand at them.

The Winnebagoes halted in their work. They were afraid of an explosion again. But they had come within gun-shot and they opened fire on my great-grandfather as fast as they could shoot their old flintlocks.

The Indians whooped louder than ever when they discovered the fort's walls on fire. They did not quite understand how it was, but they knew all that powder must blow up soon, and they did not dare to advance. That was what Etienne had counted on.

Baptême! but, how the bullets and arrows flew! So Bolerat stood for four or five minutes—just to give his people the chance—Indians howling and shooting in his front and the burning block-house with tons of powder on his right. Bullets and arrows, too, struck his plank, and the spent musket-balls knocked against his ribs.

The fort was wrapped in flames when he dropped his plank and ran for his life. He dodged behind the cover of flames and smoke and raced for the water.

Then those Winnebagoes understood, and by gar,

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sir, they were mad. They did not dare go close by the fort, so they split in two companies and ran around to the river-bluffs.

Bolerat ran straight to the water-bluff and jumped into the river. Then he swam on his side like an Indian. The canoes were waiting for him out of bullet reach, and the men started paddling toward him, but he motioned them back.

Well, pretty soon those Winnebagoes reached the bluffs and jumped down on them, yelling and shooting. Yes, sir, they were sure they could kill my great-grandfather. *Thit, thit, thit*, arrows and bullets hissed and spluttered about his ears. He dived often and swam as far under water as he could.

Meantime his men opened fire on the Indians with their long-range rifles and knocked two or three of them over. The others got behind rocks and bushes and fired at Bolerat as fast as they could. He got an arrow through the hand, a bullet hit him on the shoulder and another in his cheek. I guess they would have finished him all right, but the fort she blew up, by gar!

That settled the Indians; yes, sir, more than a hundred casks of powder went off, and timbers and firebrands and tons of earth and rubbish, they went up in the sky and commenced to fall everywhere. Lots of stuff fell on the river-slope and far out into the current. Some of the powder kegs, too, went up in the air burning, and they exploded like big shells. The uproar was tremendous. Some sixty-pound casks fell on the bluff-banks and burst among the

Winnebagoes. Yes, sir, and that finished them. They lost their wits and they ran howling like mad wolves to get out of the way.

Etienne Bolerat was quickly taken into the canoes, and he and his people went down to Prairie du Chien, where they were safe enough.

Etienne Bolerat? Me, I think he was a hero; and my great-grandmother, the Blue Bird—huh! there was a *woman*! Yes, sir, by gar, she would give her life to save her husband and child—and to be burned—slow—at the stake.

A TRAPPER'S PROTÉGÉS

A T R A P P E R ' S P R O T É G É S

In the summer and autumn of 1875 I was one of a company who perilously located placer claims on French Creek, in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Around our camp-fires was gathered a group of frontiersmen whose like could not have come together in a later decade. Many tales were told—humorous, exaggerated, truthful—the truth of the true ones easily felt, as when one listens to the narrative of a truthful child.

It was at the tent of California Joe's partners that I listened to that old pioneer's sober narrative of a trapping expedition, in which he rescued and fed two Crow children, who did him a good turn in the end.

"When I came back across the mountains from my first California trip," Joe said, "I reached Fort Laramie so ragged and poverty-struck that I was ready for any enterprise which would turn me an honest dollar. Luckily Jim Bridger was at the fort, and he put me on my feet with a trapping outfit, pack-ponies and provision, with a year's credit and longer if I should need.

" 'Now, Joe,' says Jim, 'there's plenty of room to scatter this season—smallpox among the Blackfeet and Crows and good free ground in the Yellowstone country. If you've got the grit to live out by yourself, you'll have something to lay by at next summer's meet.'

“I thought I knew where to go and three weeks later found me trailing my ponies down a branch of the Little Missouri. I began putting out traps after first frost and took beaver nearly every day. As I saw no fresh sign of Indians, I was beginning to feel as happy as a man can in a lonesome country, when, one morning, as I took an extra lap down-stream, I ran plump upon a Crow tepee and plenty of trouble. Inside that tepee, upon some old skins, I found a single Crow squaw in the last stages of smallpox and two starving papooses, so weak and wan they were pitiful to look at.

“I’d had smallpox and so had no fear; but here was a responsibility I certainly hadn’t been yearning for. I had to take it up. There had been other lodges of Crows there, but the Indians had pulled up stakes, left a few scraps of meat with the woman and her children and abandoned them—fleeing from the dreaded disease.

“The young ones had had the fever, probably light, and they were now simply starving. One was a girl of nine or ten and the other a boy a year or so younger. I made soup for the young ones, which they could hardly eat at first, they were so nearly gone.

“In three days the woman died and I buried her. Then I moved the tepee to a clean spot and began housekeeping. There was nothing for it, of course, but to take care of those little Crows until some of their kind could be found. They got well fast, once they began to eat. I fed ’em on beaver tails at first,

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and in a few days they could eat anything—and lots of it.

“We talked in sign-language until I picked up some Crow words from them. They wouldn’t try to learn English. I learned after a time that the little girl’s name was Umentukken, which means “the mountain lamb;” so I called her Lamb. The boy’s name was too much for my understanding, so I named him “Jim,” after Bridger.

“After their shyness wore off, the girl proved to be spry and uncommonly intelligent for an Indian—a willing little kit to do what she could to help. The boy was just a lazy, ordinary, small limb of a buck who ate so much at times that he reminded me of a pumpkin on two sticks. But how they did grow!

“I actually got fond of them after a while. Lamb did all our cooking, and, as winter came on, she was handy in helping to tan skins and make moccasins, jerk meat and so on. Out of one of my woolen blankets we made jackets for her and Jim and belted them around the waist to keep ’em warm. We dressed extra buffalo-hides for tepee cover and beds, and so I was saved the building of a shack. When snow came, we were living quite homelike, in peace and plenty.

“Our winter camp was on a little creek near the river, at the edge of high breaks of the Bad Lands, with dry cottonwood close at hand. Lamb and Jim would get wood, bring the ponies in at night and fasten them in a brush corral which gave them shelter from the winds. Even Jim was faithful to the ani-

mals, for, like all Indian lads, he loved a horse. I looked forward to breaking up this life with real regret, for it seemed like I had a sort of home, with a family to look after; and I was doing well with the beaver. The only plan I could make for my little Crows was to carry them back to Laramie and send them off with the first expedition into the Crow country.

“As matters turned out, though, I wasn’t to dispose of their future—they settled it for themselves in most Indian fashion. When spring thaws came and the ice ran out and the geese and ducks began to honk and quack and the air got a ‘growing’ feel in it, there came a change in my papooses. They went wild. Lamb quit housekeeping and she and Jim climbed the bluffs, watched and rambled like good-for-nothing goats.

“After a week or more of this kind of thing, the truth dawned on me. The young Crows were expecting some of their people to come down upon the river to fish and hunt the game which would gather on the first new grass of the bottoms. They wanted to return to their folks; and they knew that when the Crows should discover me and my ponies and beaver-skins, my scalp would quickly adorn one of their tepees.

“So I took thought to myself and, one day, while my birds were among the hills, I packed my pelts on ponies and cached them in a dry crevasse among some rocks five or six miles up the river.

“In a few days spring was upon me and the new grass was booming on the river-flats. I pulled up my

traps and began to get ready for a move as soon as my ponies should pick up a little. Then, one fine morning, as I sat at the tepee mending some moccasins, my young Crows came flying down from the bluffs in savage excitement. The boy ran past me and toward the ponies, which were feeding on the edge of the river-flats. Lamb burst into the tepee and scattered my smudging fire, kicking the embers out upon the grass and working like a little fury.

“‘*Santees!*’ she said, between her fierce little gasps. ‘*Santees!*’ And so I understood that the Sioux were coming—a spring swarm—down upon the river.

“‘Pony quick! Pony quick! Go—go—go!’ said Lamb, in her Crow tongue, and I waited for no further warning. While the boy was running in the ponies I gathered bridle, head ropes, lariats and gun. There was no time to pack anything else.

“‘I had four ponies, and in less than a minute we had mounted three of them, and, leading one, dashed out up the river-bottom. As we came out on the flats I looked behind, and, sure enough, there was a string of pony-riders stretching as far as I could see away over the bluffs, the nearest not a half-mile distant.

“‘We should have gone up the creek, according to my notion, and I yelled to Lamb, who was a little in the lead, to turn her pony about. But the little Crow pointed to the beetling hills and shook her head. She and Jim now forged ahead of me, holding to their ponies’ manes with one hand and plying the short ends of their lariats with the other.

"I looked back again and saw that a lot of the Sioux had seen us and were flogging their ponies into a gallop. I rode my strongest and swiftest horse, but Lamb and Jim were light-weights and kept their lead. Knowing that the instinct of Indians, big or little, is like that of wild animals in getting away from danger, I followed the little Crows.

"In less than a minute, though, I believed that I had made the mistake of my life, for right in front of us, at separate points, two more big squads of Sioux were coming over the edges of the bluffs.

"Again I yelled to Lamb, who was leading, to ride toward the river, thinking to try for a run into the country beyond, but neither she nor Jim paid any attention. That they saw the Indians in front I could not doubt, yet there they were, bending low upon their ponies' necks, whipping furiously and riding straight at the crowds now coming down the hills.

"It seemed a crazy thing to do, but I followed the Crow papooses. I didn't believe, though, there was a ghost of a chance for us any way we might run. My ponies were none of the best, were unseasoned for riding and just off the new grass, and I knew the Sioux mounts would be the pick of their big herds.

"On we went, right into the teeth of them. We passed a yelling mob coming down from above us not a quarter of a mile away, and there was another scattered party whooping off the hills in our front. The bluffs were fearfully steep for their advance, else we should have been surrounded almost instantly.

“We turned a sharp spur, and then my papooses showed their hand. They shot into the mouth of a cañon like rabbits bobbing in at a burrow. It was cover they sought in their wild instinct—cover known to them by their ramblings—a death-trap, as I believed, and yet I went in upon their heels.

“It was a regular Bad Lands cañon we had entered—a huge ditch, with dry, rough bottom, grown here and there with chaparral and with fringes of stunted pines overhead. We had no more than fairly launched into it when a tumult of yelling came down to us from Sioux who had turned upon the bluffs to head us off. As we lunged ahead I looked to see the Indians swarm out of every gulch and draw.

“Up and down we scrambled, jumping over big boulders, sliding on all fours into ditches, torn and buffeted by bushes. Lamb kept the lead, the boy following as the cottontail follows its mother.

“Fairly over our heads the Sioux yells could be heard; but they seemed to grow no nearer and I had no time to look for Indians. Soon we dodged into a side cañon, then into another and another—rock-bottomed now; a trackless trail, part of the time, at least. But we were going steadily up, up, winding out upon the hills right into the midst of the Sioux, as it seemed to me. In places the ascent was so narrow and crooked I had to jump from my pony to save my legs or to let him over a steep pitch. I had a mighty scramble to keep up with those scudding Crow babies. Presently we came out upon a sunken hog-back among low pines. We hugged this fringe of trees, lying flat

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upon our ponies in going over the slope, and then we halted under cover.

“The young Crows lay quiet, listening intently. I did as they did. The Sioux were chasing about the hills and among the cañons like packs of coyotes, noisy as they always are in crowds or when they think they have their game corralled. Their whoops came from half a dozen directions. We were pretty much surrounded, in fact, and it did not seem to me my chance of life was worth a copper.

“We listened but a few seconds. There were but two descending draws in our front. Lamb chose the one on our right, clucked to her pony, and a moment later we were scrambling down a steep washout toward the river. Again we scampered at breakneck speed, and, before I had time to think, we had come out of the hills and our animals were wading at the bottom of a run, like a big ditch, which drained across the river valley.

“I knew this run when we came to the water. We were not a mile from our own tepee, or from where it should have been if the Sioux hadn't found it. This big ditch, dry except after thaws or rains, was crooked as a ram's horn and bush-grown along the bottom. Nothing could be seen at its bottom from any point of the compass, from anywhere except the banks overhead. We traveled in its channel not faster than a stiff walk, so as not to splash water on the dry earth.

“At an old buffalo-crossing, half-way to the river, which wasn't more than a quarter-mile from the bluffs, a

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party of Sioux had already crossed the run—their trail not five minutes old. But the Crow papooses paid no heed to it; they hugged their ponies' necks and jogged ahead, intent only upon following their line of flight.

"Two or three minutes later we were wading in the river, sticking tight to the bank and going toward our own camp. We could only make two or three short turns, for the bank got low, and we halted, probably twenty rods from the mouth of the run, under a drooping fringe of willows.

"For several minutes we lay on our ponies' necks and listened. The Sioux whoops were heard now and then, but more faintly, and still among the hills. All this time those little Crows had acted exactly as if they were alone, taking no account whatever of me. I was glad enough I'd followed them, though, and I began to think they had got me well out of a scrape.

"Then suddenly the two slipped from their ponies into the shallow water, hastily made loops of their lariat ends, and, pulling their animals' heads down, muzzled their nozzles. I had heard nothing more than I'd been hearing, but I knew the papooses had caught alarming sounds, so I circled my ponies' noses as quickly as possible.

"Presently I heard muffled, jogging hoof-beats and voices calling back and forth and I knew that the rear procession of a big hunting-party, with women and children, was coming up the valley.

"Our position was one of frightful danger again. The snort of a pony, or the coming of a Sioux boy or girl to the river-bank, would have betrayed us.

“The voices of young Sioux and the angry screams of old women as they belabored some lazy or used-up pony now came to our ears distinctly. We scarcely breathed. Luckily there were no flies to cause our ponies to stamp and splash.

“A half-hour or more passed before the sounds of marching Sioux grew faint and finally ceased. Still Lamb and Jim stood, holding fast to their muzzle-ropes and remaining as motionless as two willow stumps.

“It seemed an age before they ceased that tense silence and climbed upon their ponies, looking to me at last for direction. Then I knew that we had escaped as the rabbits escape.

“The squads of Sioux hunting for us had certainly mixed trails; but we had no tepee to go to, and that locality was full of danger, and would be, for weeks to come.

“So we forded the river and followed a creek valley into the western foot-hills. We traveled until nearly night. Then I shot a deer and made camp.

“The next morning my two little Crows had flown for good. They had stolen away while I slept, taking some meat and two of the ponies. I didn't begrudge them the animals, but I knew then they had been plotting to do that very thing for a long time. I haven't a doubt they reached the Crow villages on the Yellowstone, although I never saw them again.

“I waited until the coast was clear of Sioux, and then returned to my cache, and managed finally to get to Laramie with my beaver.”



"Lamb and Jim stood holding fast to their muzzle ropes."

THE TRADER'S DILEMMA

THE TRADER'S DILEMMA

Justin McAndrew, an old fur-trader, was neighbor to my grandfather in my boyhood days. He knew every foot of the Fox and Wisconsin waterways and of the Missouri River as well. Before a military post was built at Prairie du Chien he had made a number of bateau voyages between that point and Green Bay. On one of these trips his helpers and river-pilots below Portage la Prairie were two Winnebagoes—Many Stars and One-Eyed Dakorra, or Decoré, whose grandfather was a Frenchman. These Indians spoke enough English to make themselves fairly understood.

There was always need of pilots for the loaded bateaux on the Wisconsin River. Treacherous, shifting sand-bars reached out abruptly into what seemed like lakes of deep water. In spite of the familiarity of his pilots with this waterway, McAndrew's boat stuck now and then, causing vexatious delays.

But something of more serious import occurred on the afternoon of their second day's voyage. As the bateau drifted alongside a bluff in a district thickly studded with patches of whortleberry, McAndrew, seated upon bales of blankets in the bow, looked upward to see the heads and shoulders of numerous dusky figures. A crowd of Indians, strange to the newcomer, were standing among the berry bushes and gazing curiously down upon the boat and its occupants.

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The young trader turned to his pilots inquiringly, but saw from their stern and forbidding faces that he had better keep silence. Many Stars had thrown a blanket over his shoulders to cover his plaited and befeathered braids. Dakorra had snatched up and donned a bell-crowned, wide-brimmed hat which McAndrew had found too warm for comfort. Both Indians were making awkward and unusual motions with their paddles and their employer understood that they wished to pass the bluff unrecognized as Winnebagoes.

But the keen eyes upon the bluff were not to be deceived. As the bateau drew opposite the berry-pickers, sharp cries rose: "Winnebago! Winnebago!" the voices shouted, with a fierce, guttural accent upon the last syllable.

The bateau's prow veered quickly toward mid-current and McAndrew, seizing a pair of oars, sprang to the assistance of his Indians, whose fierce strokes betokened a desperate need of haste.

Well was it for them that all three worked with might and main, for a shower of arrows fell all about them. *Thit! thit! thut!* The water hissed and bubbled with falling missiles. Three or four struck the bateau, but the range, even at the beginning of the flight, was considerable. No one was hit, and, in a minute, the boat was beyond arrow-shot.

When assured of this, both Winnebagoes dropped their paddles, caught up their guns and turned eagerly to fire upon the enemy. All the black heads, however, had vanished.

McAndrew, hoping this spasmodic attack upon his

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boat would end the episode, besought his Indians not to fire into the bushes where the hostiles had been. They complied only because they could not see their enemies. They stood erect and defiant, their eyes snapping wrathfully as they shouted taunts and threats at the skulkers.

Seeing no responsive movement, they finally resumed their paddles. "This much bad," said Many Stars to McAndrew. "This Ponca—he Omaha—he Sioux. Winnebago know him heap bad. Me guess him take scalp now."

This was comforting, truly! McAndrew was far enough from accepting such a conclusion with the Indian's fatalistic stoicism.

"Paddle!" he said. "Paddle for your lives before they get into their canoes!"

"Huh!" grunted both Winnebagoes in contempt of useless exertion.

"No good paddle," said Dakorra. "No good go up—no good go down—no good go closs. Ponca him got heap hoss—can catch, anyhow."

"Heap Ponca—him take scalp to-night, me guess," added Many Stars.

McAndrew, having traded but a year or two in that region, had not yet met the Ponca Sioux, but he knew they and the Winnebagoes had quarreled fiercely of late. Were there a thousand of them, however, he had no mind to drift into such trap as they might choose to lay for him. He exerted his authority, therefore, as an employer, and sternly bade his Indians ply their paddles.

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With himself at the oars, they were soon doubling the speed of a five-mile current. Even on the best of horses the Sioux could not follow over the bluffs and through the woods for many hours, and the neutral, or "sacred ground of the tribes" was but a day's journey in advance.

Encouraged by their employer's vigorous use of the oars, Many Stars and Dakorra applied themselves with energy. Had it not been for the shifting sand-bars the bateau must soon have tired out any pursuit along-shore; but there were unavoidable delays.

Soon after noon the paddlers rounded a sharp curve of the river to discover the whole war party of Poncas, divided in two bands, awaiting their approach. One division was stationed alongshore upon the left, and another, seated upon ponies, upon a bar near the mid-current.

The position was cunningly chosen. The width of navigable current lay between the parties, and hardly exceeded fifty yards. To put the boat about and toil slowly up-stream was but briefly to delay the inevitable. The bateau's case was truly desperate.

McAndrew looked at his Winnebagoes; but these, with unflinching faces and stern demeanor, continued to ply their paddles. The bateau was kept in mid-current and sent forward at the speed of a trotting horse, until a chief with high head-gear pressed out from his fellows and motioned the boatmen to approach.

As the odds were overwhelming, there seemed nothing to do but obey; and Dakorra, muttering



"The chief's hand actually grasped the boat's bow."

THE TRADER'S DILEMMA

"Yellow Wolf! Chief Yellow Wolf!" turned the bateau's prow in the direction of the warrior. Then to McAndrew the Winnebago hissed under his breath: "Big chief—you catch—bling um in boat!"

The trader was young—a large and very powerful man and active as a cat. With intense excitement he looked at the Ponca chief, now eagerly and confidently advancing beyond his fellows. The pony he rode was already more than girth-deep in water and could with difficulty keep its feet.

McAndrew shipped his oars in apparent readiness to go ashore. Many Stars ceased paddling.

Dakorra steered the bateau. Apparently he was trying to bring the boat alongside the chief, who leaned forward to seize it by the prow. Other Poncas pressed forward to be next to their leader in seizing the Winnebagoes.

The chief's hand actually grasped the boat's bow, which was slipping by, when McAndrew swept an oar backward and struck him upon the skull. The blow knocked him from his horse and the pony, plunging backward, impeded the progress of those behind.

As quick as thought McAndrew threw out a hand, caught the sinking chief by his arm and drew him alongside. In a trice the dazed Indian was hauled aboard, while Many Stars, with knife lifted to strike, warned his fellows back.

The Poncas could not shoot their arrows without endangering their chief, and the bateau had slipped beyond their reach. For an instant the baffled Indians stood or sat with open mouths; then changed their

attitude with the shiftiness characteristic of Indian tactics.

They made friendly overtures to the receding boat. These were ignored with contempt, while the knife flourished above their chief warned them of his fate should they attempt a rescue. And so they withdrew to the wooded shores, to follow the bateau and to plot what further should be done.

The Ponca chief, fast bound, was set in the bow to recover his wits at leisure. By their quick-wittedness, but chiefly by the accident of Yellow Wolf's eagerness and his pony's floundering, McAndrew and his Winnebagoes had saved their lives.

The Winnebagoes were elated beyond measure, as they showed by excited exclamations in their own tongue. But McAndrew knew that for him the incident was by no means closed. He had no fear of the Poncas upon the river now, but at Prairie du Chien, the neutral ground of the tribes, there was a village of Winnebagoes, and both these and the Poncas would demand of him the prisoner, Yellow Wolf. The demands would probably be complicated in such ways and by such influences as only the go-between among Indians has had to contend with.

McAndrew knew perfectly that at the mouth of the Wisconsin the clans would foregather. The Poncas could not there attempt a rescue, but they would maintain that their young men had, under a misapprehension, shot arrows at his boat and that Yellow Wolf had followed the bateau to make amends.

The Winnebagoes, whose actual rights must be

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respected by all parties on the neutral ground, would simply demand the prisoner as their property, and, if the demand were acceded to, they were quite powerful and subtle enough to spirit Yellow Wolf away and put him to the torture. It was quite possible, too, that McAndrew would have to have a personal struggle with his helpers, finally, for possession of the prisoner's body. The trader was by no means ready to surrender the chief to torture; yet Yellow Wolf deserved punishment.

While the trader brooded, his Winnebagoes paddled on, much elated. Yellow Wolf, who had recovered his senses, sat glowering in disgust over the edge of the boat, as if minded to tumble himself into the current.

"He might as well go to the bottom and stay there," thought McAndrew, "for his life depends wholly on my efforts. Every other trader at the Prairie will wash his hands of the whole affair."

In the meantime, the boat went forward till night-fall. The bateau was then hauled up on a sand-bar and the boatmen took turns in guarding their prisoner, so each could gain some hours of sleep.

Before noon the next day the bateau had entered the neutral ground and, shortly afterward, Dakorra handed his steering-paddle to Many Stars, slipped over the edge of the boat and swam ashore.

"Him go Plala du Chien," explained Many Stars, "git Winnebago—take boat up river."

McAndrew simply nodded assent. It was *his* business to send for extra "paddles," should they be

needed at the mouth of the Wisconsin. He knew that Dakorra would run across to the traders' fort with all speed to inform the Winnebago town of Yellow Wolf's capture. A crowd would immediately gather at the Wisconsin landing.

But he had formed his plan and was relieved to know that there would be but one Winnebago in his boat, should any attempt be made to thwart his purpose. There was only one sure way out of the dilemma—the way of a strong and absolutely fearless man—and McAndrew took it.

At the Wisconsin River landing, as the trader had expected, were gathered, an hour later, a crowd of Winnebagoes eager to lay hands upon the prisoner; and their triumphant shouts grew clamorous as the bateau approached. Near at hand, too, the Poncas were encamped; and they stood upon the bank, silently waiting to see what disposition would be made of their chief.

As his boat's prow touched the landing, McAndrew, gun in hand, waved back the advancing Winnebagoes. These Indians halted, muttering, when they saw him about to push his boat offshore. A number of *voyageurs* were lying about the bank, looking on curiously. McAndrew spoke to one of these, whom he knew.

"Zhack," he said, "will you interpret what I have to tell these Indians?"

The *voyageur* consented. The trader then spoke to the Winnebagoes as follows:

"This man, Yellow Wolf, is my prisoner. He attacked my boat and men in my employ. I am a

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captain, and I wish to punish him myself. I will do so immediately and before you all. Stand aside now, and you shall see it done, as I have said."

This was interpreted sentence by sentence, both to the Poncas and the Winnebagoes. The latter were openly chagrined, but supposing Yellow Wolf was to be killed, they stood aside, while McAndrew marched his prisoner out upon a high bank. He then stood Yellow Wolf between his friends and his foes.

On the bateau the trader had thrust an extra knife in his belt. He now deliberately cut the bonds upon Yellow Wolf's wrists, placed the boat-knife in his hands, and then drew his own. For fear the Ponca chief might retreat among his friends, McAndrew boxed his ears smartly with one hand.

Grunts of approval from all hands greeted his action. The Poncas were delighted to see their chief given his chance in an honorable fight and the Winnebagoes were forced to admire so generous and so brave a captor.

Stung to sudden and impulsive anger by the blow, Yellow Wolf certainly did not stop to reflect upon his captor's generosity. He "pitched in," as McAndrew put it, in tremendous fashion.

For a moment, despite his great strength, his trained activity and disciplined brain, the odds seemed rather against the trader. Yellow Wolf's onset was furious. Without attempting to cut the Indian with his knife, McAndrew parried rapid thrusts and dodged headlong lunges until, with a sweep of his left hand, he caught Yellow Wolf's knife wrist. This he bent

backward till it cracked, and the knife dropped from his nerveless fingers.

McAndrew then lifted the Indian in his powerful grasp, carried him forward amid grunts of amazement and flung him, helpless, defeated and humiliated, upon the ground among his tribesmen.

"I give you your life," he said, "because you are a papoose."

Physically and morally he was victor. His fine courage and tremendous display of strength won the admiration of the Winnebagoes, and the Poncas immediately named him *Washushe*, The Generous.

Yellow Wolf, in after days, became his faithful friend and ally.

I N T H E S C R O G S

IN THE SCROGS

Beginning at twelve years of age, I herded my father's cattle for three seasons upon the grasses of an uninhabited township of marsh and gravel knolls. It was a lazy, lonesome business, but was enlivened in the later months by the coming of my cousin, Aleck Forster, an athletic boy of about my own age, whose father kept a store in a distant Mississippi town. In lieu of a gun, for which his father thought him too young, Aleck brought an abundance of stout, elastic rubbers and large shot.

I have never seen a boy so expert with the sling-shot. He had the weapon of all sizes; and with one especially large, which he called his "cannon," he frequently crippled plover and duck at twenty to thirty yards' range, and often killed the birds outright. Indeed, he threw buckshot from his "cannon" with the precision of Indian archery.

In September when geese, brant, and crane came down from the north in great herds, Aleck was wild to kill a goose, but this game proved too wary for his short-range weapon.

From the top of a high gravel knoll we could look down upon the Scrogs, a famous peat marsh, and see myriads of great birds hovering upon and over its labyrinthine strips of water. Into this slough many of the big birds went to roost at night, and to puddle and lie about at midday.

The Scrogs had an evil reputation. Only one hunter and trapper had ever been known to go inside

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its dense fringes of rushes. This was old Jim Harned, who had a trapper's hut on the Little Sioux. He had named the treacherous slough, and he kept a dugout canoe at the Scrogs. The whole tortuous shore line was a floating peat bed, into which no boat could be pushed, except at one spot, for the feet could not tread elsewhere.

For more than a week Aleck and I watched crowds of geese and brant come and go at the Scrogs; then temptation got the better of us. If we could find Harned's canoe, and once get inside that big slough, we could, we thought, kill geese with the sling-shot.

Knowing that we could safely leave the cattle for some hours at midday, we set out for the Scrogs one forenoon with an extra ration of bread and butter, and our pockets loaded with shot. My qualms of conscience at deserting my post were soothed by the hope of bringing six or a dozen fat geese home.

Bevies of big birds heavily flying from their morning's feed upon the fields enlivened our two-mile tramp. *Ok-kud-dr-dr-dr!* shrilled the great flapping sand-hill crane. *Killilla-tata-tata!* chuckled the crop-full brant, and above all sounded the boom of the Canada gander: *Gaw-loough-gaw-loough-g' luh!*

Soon we were wading through swampy cornstalk grass higher than our heads. When we neared the first fringe of rushes, the sod began to sink beneath our feet, and we were obliged to turn aside and skirt the rushes. Then, hunting for the canoe, we tramped on amid clusters of fire-stunted willow and tangle of bog, roots, and high-water débris.



“Through a bottomless mass of tangled roots, water-weed and floating peat”

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We could hear the big water-fowl, ducks, and mud-hens puddling, flapping, and quacking just beyond the rushes. Now and then we saw strips of open water, alive with geese and brant. When the distance was not too great, we fired buckshot at them. Almost entirely hidden, as we were, the birds paid no attention to us. At length Aleck knocked over a white-faced goose by a chance shot upon the skull, which elated us beyond measure.

After an hour of hard tramping over quaking bog we stumbled on the canoe. There was a long paddle in it, and the trail, over which the old trapper had dragged the craft, was easily traced.

At first it took our combined strength to move the canoe, but as we advanced, the sod sank, water came up, and we slid it along easily until we could get in and shove it forward with the paddle.

Soon we slipped in among the rushes, and here the difficulties should have furnished enough warning. Through a bottomless mass of tangled roots, water-weed, and floating peat we struggled, often getting the paddle-blade stuck. We were half an hour or more in moving a dozen yards.

A great flock of geese arose; ducks and grebe fled flapping and squalling in all directions, as we entered open water. Then, when the canoe was fairly settled and afloat, a leak near the bottom began filling it with water. We drew the craft upon a muskrat-house presently, and turned the water out. The "house," of woven flags and rushes, sank nearly to the level of the slough before we had finished bailing.

Nothing daunted, we paddled on, firing buckshot at clouds of big birds which rose before us, but this proved a waste of ammunition.

Progress was tedious. The canoe had to be bailed every ten or fifteen minutes, and now and then the rat-houses sank with us before we could overturn the craft. After an hour or two thus poking around we found the goose which Aleck had killed, and proud we were as we lifted the big bird into our canoe.

"Tell you what," proposed Aleck, "let's run the canoe into the rushes and shoot among their necks as they swin around."

"That might do," I answered, "if the canoe didn't leak. I think we'd best go back to the cattle now."

Aleck reluctantly submitted, and we paddled about upon the narrow strips of sedgy water, affrighting birds and muskrats, trying to return the canoe to the landing whence we had taken it. We supposed we had well noted the place, but after another hour of paddling and bailing, we concluded that we could not find it. So we determined to make a landing somewhere else, mark the spot, and tell Harned where to find his canoe.

We were nearly swamped in the first attempt to get ashore. In the second we fared no better. Twice the canoe was half-filled before we could get back to a rat-house. Everywhere we met the same mazy tangles and masses of floating peat, of roots and sedge, with mire beneath, in which the paddle stuck and hung. When we succeeded, now and then, in

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forcing our prow upon a strip of bog, it promptly sank, and progress was blocked.

There were places where I think we could have made an exit with a light canoe and two paddles, but in our leaky, hollow log it would have been impossible to force a way through at any point we tried.

It was long after noon when we found a very large and apparently stable rat-house, on which we lodged for dinner, and ate our bread and butter. Neither of us dared express the fear that we were hopelessly caught in the Scrogs. Instead, we talked bravely, now and then, of the fine goose we had killed, and smacked our lips at the prospect of to-morrow's feast. Of course the goose would be stuffed and baked for supper.

After eating and resting, we attempted landing upon boggy points free of rushes, but nowhere could we force the dugout upon the bogs or into them. When we tried to tear out a path with our hands the canoe became wedged and nearly sank with us.

After an hour or two of tedious work we returned to the prominent rat-house. Weary and dejected we flung our bodies upon the flags, knowing we must spend that night in the Scrogs. We were four miles from any habitation, and hallooing would be waste of breath.

Would any one search this slough for us? We thought it unlikely.

"They'll just think we've run away," was Aleck's gloomy comment, "and they'll look for us everywhere but in this hole."

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Yes, they were likely to think I had run away, for I had grumbled much at my lot as a herder.

We dressed our goose, cut strips of breast steak, and half roasted them over a blaze of dry rushes, laid upon the wet edges of the rat-house. We ate the meat, with a morsel of bread, and drank sparingly of slimy water. Then we made nests to lie in among the flags and rushes, upon a slope of our strange domicile.

The geese and brant which came tumbling into the Scrogs after sunset were beyond account or conjecture. Their roar and clamor shook the air. After this incoming flight there was the constant puddle and spatter of fowl. Their calls and cries were mingled with the marsh notes of smaller fry. Listening to these, and with muskrats swimming all about us, we fell asleep.

The weather was warm and dry, and I awoke but once in the night, startled by the yapping of wolves upon a near gravel knoll. Their dismal music was accompanied by the call of loons, the pumping of bittern, and the cries of grebe, rail, and other night-squawkers.

It was broad day when I next awoke, sat up, and instantly saw two dead geese lying upon their backs some thirty feet away. Much astonished, I awoke Aleck and got an explanation. Unused to the racket of wolves, he had lain awake for a long time, and as flocks of geese hurtled by, craning their necks in the starlight, he had fired buckshot at them. So we should not soon starve.

“We may have to stay here until Harned comes to

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trap," I said to Aleck, "and if he doesn't come until the slough freezes over, if we run out of shot I know how to snare these muskrats in their holes."

Now that we had spent a night in the Scrogs, we seemed to feel that we could not get out. We no longer attempted to deceive each other or ourselves, and we felt better for it.

"I haven't really believed any of the time that we'd ever find our way out the way we came in," Aleck admitted, to my surprise. "The canoe didn't leave any trail among the water-rushes. Your old trapper knows the lay of this plaguy slough, and we don't, that's all."

We worried and bailed all that forenoon, and got so far away from the big rat-house that we were completely done out, twisting and turning among the waterways, in finding it. Never have I had such a sense of coming home to rest and safety as when we finally landed on that floating heap.

We did not stir again that afternoon, but ate our half-roasted meat and lay and watched the birds and talked. Aleck killed a venturesome mallard toward night. Then we gathered rushes for fires and scorched all our meat to preserve it.

That evening the big fowl came tumbling in again. What intimate sense of nearness we had as they sloped down, craning their necks to cock single large eyes at us, every broad wing-feather clearly sketched, and red legs and webbed feet dropping to strike the water! We lost the hunter's instinct in a new sense of kinship, and then we slept again.

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I awoke the next morning to find my feet in water—the rat-house had begun sinking. I awoke Aleck. Then we looked at each other with white faces and narrowing eyes. This mound, of matted rush and flag, was our only refuge. Nowhere in the sloughs had we found another footing good for five minutes' tenure.

Something must be done, and quickly. Gathering calmness from the imminence of our peril, we began to think. Soon we hit upon the plan of piling rushes and flags, torn from other rat-houses, upon this one. This would bear us up until our loose stuff should be set afloat; after that survival would be limited to the few hours of our endurance. We shouted and hallooed, and determined to repeat this, as a forlorn hope, at intervals.

Soon we had our mound piled with a stack of loose stuff several feet in height. Then we ate our goose meat in silence, but thinking hard. At last a plan of escape seemed to have been thrust into my mind by some extraneous force; it was alive in my brain with such suddenness—make a rope!

Make a rope of those tough, white rushes, sprinkled among the common sort. Fourteen strands of split reed would make a rope to hold a yoke of oxen. There was the boggy cape, free of rushes, with a clump of sprangling willow stumps, at the point of a strip of land, near its center. Something could be done with a rope! And I could make hundreds of feet of rope if there were time enough.

I swallowed my meat in gulps while I poured this

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plan into Aleck's ears. Aleck was hopeful. If I could really make a stout rope, and one long enough, there was a chance on that boggy point, he admitted.

Then Aleck gathered reeds and I began to braid with all speed. It was tedious business; every inch of rope needed careful work. When I had produced several feet we tested the piece by our united strength. The result was satisfactory. At sunset I had more than thirty feet of rope on hand. Our rat-house had sunken several inches during the day. At intervals we had shouted.

That night we slept without sense of security. The wolves howled again, but Aleck killed no birds. Our mound was still lower in the morning, and we piled more loose stuff on top. We put in the day working, with a kind of feverish care, Aleck splitting and wetting the reeds while I braided. At night we had about eighty feet of stout and fairly pliable rope.

In the mean time our foundation had gone down until we saw that we had not many hours left. Gradually, as by clock-work, the big rat-house was sinking into the bottomless sponge of the Scrogs. Aleck made rush fire-lights and I worked until far into the night. In the morning we calculated that we had about twelve hours of stable foothold left us.

We worked on until noon, testing every foot of rope as it was produced. We then had something more than one hundred and fifty feet, the least we could hope to work with successfully. We had but little time to spare. As we set out finally from our

domicile, the top of the original heap was nearly at the level of the slough.

We reached the boggy point, where lay our hope of escape, in a few minutes' paddling; and here we set to work, in a kind of cool excitement. There was a good-sized rat-house near one edge of this cape of peat. Thin grass, but no rushes, grew in the bog, and a narrow strip of marsh land jutted into the center of the cape. At the extreme point of the strip grew the scraggy willow stumps.

Reaching the rat-house, we bailed the canoe, and then drove the small end of the paddle, sharpened for that purpose, through the center of the rush-heap until only the blade projected. Then Aleck stood upon top of the house with legs astride the paddle blade, which gave him bracing foothold, while I took the canoe, tipping it over to the sound side, and pulled around the edge of the bog.

The rope was tied in a slip-knot over and under my shoulder, and Aleck held the stiff coil, paid it out, and swung it above the bog, as I toiled slowly around the point.

At last we had our rope stretched across the peat to within ten feet or so of the willow clump, but now Aleck had sunk, paddle and rat-house, until he stood to mid-legs in water.

"You'll have to hurry," he called, "or my feet'll be fast in the mud!"

I worked the canoe around a little farther; gave the rope a flirt upward with a swoop sideways, and looped the willow stumps fairly at their base. Then

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I began, frantically, working back toward Aleck. But the rope, no longer handled at both ends, of course caught upon the bogs. As I wriggled about, too, the canoe began filling, and Aleck was shouting for help.

We had planned making a kind of bridge by tying both ends of the rope around the dugout at the edge of the bog. Seeing this could not be done, I shouted to Aleck to pull himself across to the willows, hand over hand, and I would do the same. I had hardly finished speaking when there was a tug at the rope, and pulling against each other and the willows and bogs, we scrambled for dear life over the shaking mire of peat.

I could not see Aleck, but was going famously and had come within a dozen yards of the willows, when my legs sank in a strip of soft mire and roots, and strain as I might, I could not pull them out. The more I struggled the firmer I was stuck.

I threw one arm over a bog and tried with the other hand to free my feet. I worked in a fury of fright, sinking deeper and also feeling my bog give way. The water rose around me, and I saw that a whole section of bog was going down with me.

Then I heard Aleck shouting: "Lie still, I tell you—perfectly still, till I can cut a club!"

Above the tops of thin grass I could see the crown of his bare head, as he bent at work among the willow stubs. I lay, for what seemed a frightful space of time, slowly, steadily sinking into the mire pit. Then Aleck spoke again. "Is your rope tight around you?" he asked.

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“Yes! yes!” I gasped.

Presently I felt the loop tighten suffocatingly upon my chest, and then, inch by inch, fighting to keep my face out of mud and water, I was drawn out of my pit, until I could again help with my legs. Aleck, clever river-lad, had “snub-twisted” me out of the last deadly gripe of the Scrogs.

A moment later we stood by the willows, a pair of hatless, beslimed, but joyful youngsters—free and safe, after five days in the Scrogs!

At home they had hunted the herd ground over for us, and then, recalling certain preparation and fluster on the morning of our departure, they had felt certain that my city cousin had coaxed me to run away. They were doing their best to find us, but no one had dreamed of looking in the Scrogs.

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